THE WAY TO CHRIST

JACOB BOEHME

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THE WAY to CHRIST

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THE WAY to CHRIST,

Described

In the following TREATISES:

Of True Repentance.
Of True Resignation.
Of Regeneration.
Of the Super-Sensual Life.

BY

JACOB BOEHME.

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THE FIRST BOOK.

OF

TRUE REPENTANCE.

SHEWING

How Man should stir up himself

IN

MIND and WILL

AND

What his EARNEST CONSIDERATION
and PURPOSE should be.

Written in the German Language,

(Anno 1622)

By JACOB BOEHME.

JESUS said unto Nicodemus, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.—**John iii. 3–8.**

What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?—**Matt. xvi. 26.**

The Author's Preface, to the Reader

DEAR Reader, if thou wilt use this book aright, and art in good earnest, thou shalt certainly find the benefit thereof.—But I desire thou mayest be warned, if thou art not in earnest, not to meddle with the dear names of God, in and by which the most High Holiness is invoked, moved, and powerfully desired, lest they kindle the anger of God in thy soul. For we must not abuse the holy names of God. –This little book is only for those that would fain repent, and are in a desire to begin.

Such will find what manner of words are therein, and whence they are born. Be you herewith commended to the eternal goodness and mercy of God.

OF TRUE REPENTANCE

How man must stir up himself in mind and will; and what his consideration and earnest purpose must be, when he will perform powerful and effectual repentance: and with what mind he must appear before God, when he would ask, so as to obtain, remission of sins.

WHEN man will enter upon repentance, and with his prayers turn to God; he should, before he beginneth to pray, seriously consider the state of his own soul. How it is wholly and altogether turned away from God, become faithless to Him, and only bent upon this temporal, frail, and earthly life; bearing no sincere love towards God and

its neighbour, but wholly lusting and walking contrary to the commandments of God, and seeking itself only, in the temporal and transitory lusts of the flesh.

In the next place, he should consider that all this is an utter enmity against God, which Satan hath raised and wrought in him, by his deceit in our first parents; for which abomination's sake we must suffer death, and undergo corruption with our bodies.

Thirdly, he should consider the three horrible chains wherewith our souls are fast bound during the time of this earthly life.—The First is the severe anger of God, the abyss and dark world, which is the centre, root, or constituent principle of the soul's life. The Second is the desire of the devil against the soul, whereby he continually sifteth and tempteth it, and without intermission striveth to throw it from the truth of God into his own evil nature and element, viz., into pride, covetousness, envy and anger; and

with his desire bloweth up and kindleth those evil properties in the soul, whereby its will turneth away from God and entereth into self. The Third and most hurtful chain of all, wherewith the poor soul is tied, is the corrupt and altogether vain, earthly, and mortal flesh and blood, full of evil desires and inclinations.

Here he must consider that he lieth close prisoner with soul and body in the mire of sins, in the anger of God, in the jaws of hell; that the anger of God burneth in him in soul and body, and that he is that very loathsome keeper of swine, who hath spent and consumed his Father's inheritance, namely, the precious love and mercy of God, with the fatted swine of the devil, in earthly pleasures, and hath not kept the dear covenant and atonement of the innocent death and passion of Jesus Christ; which covenant God of mere grace hath given or put into our humanity, and reconciled us in Him. He must also consider, that

he hath totally forgotten the covenant of holy Baptism, in which he had promised to be faithful and true to his Saviour, and so wholly defiled and obscured His righteousness with sin (which righteousness God had freely bestowed upon him in Christ), that he now standeth before the face of God, with the fair garment of Christ's innocency, which he hath defiled, as a dirty, ragged, and patched keeper of swine, that hath continually eaten the husks of vanity with the devil's swine, and is not worthy to be called a son of the Father, and member of Christ.

Fourthly, he should earnestly consider that wrathful death awaiteth him every hour and moment, and will lay hold on him in his sins in his garment of a swine-herd, and throw him into the pit of hell as a foresworn person and breaker of faith, who ought to be reserved in the dark dungeon of death to the judgment of God.

Fifthly, he should consider the

earnest and severe day of God's final judgment, when he shall be presented living, with his abominations, before God's tribunal. That all those whom he hath here offended or injured by words and works, and caused to do evil (so that by his instigation or compulsion they also have committed evil), shall come in against him, cursing him before the eyes of Christ and of all holy angels and men. That there he shall stand in great shame and ignominy, and also in great terror and desperation, and that it shall forever grieve him to reflect that he hath fooled away so glorious and eternal a state of salvation and happiness for the pleasure of so short a time; and that he had not taken care in that short time to secure to himself a share in the communion of the saints, and so to have enjoyed with them eternal light, and divine glory.

Sixthly, he must consider that the ungodly man loseth his noble image, God having created him in and for His

image or creaturely representation, and getteth instead thereof a deformed or monstrous shape, like a hellish worm or ugly beast. Wherein he is an enemy to God, heaven, and all holy angels and men, and that his communion is, and will be forever, with the devils and hellish worms in horrible darkness.

Seventhly, he must earnestly consider the eternal punishment and torture of the damned; how that in eternal horror they shall suffer torments in their abominations which they had committed here, and may never see the land of the saints to all eternity, nor get any ease or refreshment, as appears by the example of Dives, the rich man.

All this a man must earnestly and seriously consider, and remember also that God had originally created him in such a fair and glorious image, even in His own likeness, in which He Himself would dwell. That He created him out of His goodness for man's

own eternal bliss and glory, to the end that he might dwell with the holy angels and children of God in great happiness, power and glory; in the eternal light; in the praiseful and melodious harmony of the angelical and divine kingdom of joy. Where he should rejoice continually with the children of God without fear of any end. Where no evil thoughts could touch him, neither care nor trouble, neither heat nor cold. Where no night is known: where there is no day or limited time any more, but an everlasting blessedness, wherein soul and body tremble for joy. And where he himself should rejoice at the infinite wonders and virtues appearing in the brightness of colours, and the variety of splendour opened and displayed by the omnipotent powers and glories of God, upon the new chrystalline earth, which shall be as transparent glass. And that he doth so wilfully lose all this eternal glory and happiness for the sake of so short and poor a time,

which even in this state of vanity and corruption, in the evil life of the voluptuous flesh, is full of misery, fear and utter vexation; and wherein it goeth with the wicked as with the righteous, as the one must die so must the other; only the death of the saints is an entrance into the eternal rest, while the death of the wicked is an introduction into the eternal anguish.

Eighthly, he must consider the course of this world, that all things in it are but a play, wherewith he spendeth his time in such unquietness; and that it goeth with the rich and mighty as with the poor and the beggar. That all of us equally live and move in the four elements; and that the hard-earned morsel of the poor is as relishing and savoury to him in his labour, as the dainties of the rich are to him in his cares. Also, that all of us subsist by one breath, and that the rich man hath nothing but the pleasures of the palate and the lust of the eye for a little while,

more than his poor neighbour, for the end of both is the same. Yet for this short-lived lust's sake, many foolishly forego so inconceivable a happiness, and bring themselves into so extreme and eternal misery.

In the deep consideration of these weighty truths, man shall come to feel in his heart and mind, especially if he at the same time represent and set before his eyes his own end, a hearty sighing and longing after the mercy of God, and will begin to bewail his committed sins; and to be sorry he hath spent his days so ill, and not observed or considered that he standeth in this world as in a field, in the growing to be a fruit either in the love or in the anger of God. He will then first begin to find in himself that he hath not yet laboured at all in the vineyard of Christ, but that he is a dry fruitless branch of the Vine. And thus in many a one, whom the spirit of Christ toucheth in such a consideration, there ariseth abundant sorrow,

grief of heart, and inward lamentation over the days of his wickedness which he hath spent in vanity, without any working in the vineyard of Christ.

Such a man whom the spirit of Christ thus bringeth into sorrow and repentance, so that his heart is opened both to know and bewail his sins, is very easily to be helped. He needeth but to draw to himself the promise of Christ, viz., That God willeth not the death of a sinner, but that He wisheth them all to come unto Him, and He will refresh them; and that there is great joy in heaven for one sinner that repenteth. Let such a one but lay hold on the words of Christ, and wrap himself up into His meritorious passion and death.

But I will now speak to those who feel indeed in themselves a desire to repent, and yet cannot come to acknowledge and bewail their committed sins. The flesh saying continually to the soul, Stay awhile, it is well enough; or it is time enough to-

morrow; and when to-morrow is come, then the flesh saith again, to-morrow; the soul in the meanwhile, sighing and fainting, conceiveth neither any true sorrow for the sins it hath committed, nor any comfort. Unto such a one, I say, I will write a Process or Way, which I myself have gone, that he may know what he must do, and how it went with me, if peradventure he be inclined to enter into and pursue the same, and then he will come to understand what he shall find here afterwards written.

A Process of Repentance; or Way to Conversion

WHEN any man findeth in himself by the former or any other considerations, pressed home upon his mind and conscience, a hunger, or desire to repent,

and yet feeleth no true sorrow in himself for his sins which he hath committed, but only a hunger, or desire of such sorrow; so that the poor captive soul continually sigheth, feareth, and must needs acknowledge itself guilty of sins before the judgment of God. Such a one, I say, can take no better course than this, namely, to wrap up his senses, mind, and reason together, and make to himself instantly, as soon as ever he perceiveth in himself the desire to repent, a mighty, strong purpose and resolution that he will that very hour, nay that minute, immediately enter into repentance, and go forth from his wicked way, and not at all regard the power and respect of the world. Yea, and if it should be required, would forsake and disesteem all things for true repentance' sake; and never depart from that resolution again, though he should be made the fool and scorn of all the world for it. But that with the full bent and strength of his mind he will go forth

from the beauty and pleasure of the world, and patiently enter into the passion and death of Christ in and under the cross, and set all his hope and confidence upon the life to come. That even now in righteousness and truth he will enter into the vineyard of Christ, and do the will of God. That in the spirit and will of Christ he will begin and finish all his actions in this world, and for the sake of Christ's word and promise, which holds forth to us a heavenly reward, willingly take up and bear every adversity and cross, so that he may but be admitted into the communion or fellowship of the children of Christ, and in the blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ be incorporated and united unto His humanity.

He must firmly imagine to himself, and wholly wrap up his soul in this persuasion, that in such his purpose he shall obtain the love of God in Christ Jesus, and that God will give unto him according to His faithful

promise, that noble pledge, the Holy Ghost, for an earnest; that, in the humanity of Christ, as to the heavenly substance, he shall be born again in himself, and that the spirit of Christ will renew his mind with His love and power, and strengthen his weak Faith. Also that in his divine hunger he shall get the flesh and blood of Christ for food and drink, in the desire of his soul, which hungereth and thirsteth after it as its proper nutriment; and with the thirst of the soul drink the water of eternal life out of the sweet fountain of Jesus Christ, as Christ's most true and steadfast promise is.

He must also wholly and firmly imagine to himself, and set before him, the great love of God. That God willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he repent and believe; that Christ calleth poor sinners very kindly and graciously to Himself, and will refresh them; that God hath sent His Son into the world, to seek and save that which is lost, viz., the poor

repentant and returning sinner; and that for the poor sinner's sake He hath given His life unto death, and died for him in our humanity which He took upon Him.

Furthermore, he must firmly persuade himself that God in Christ Jesus will much more readily hear him and receive him to grace, than he will come; and that God in the love of Christ, in the most dear and precious name JESUS, cannot will any evil. That there is no angry countenance at all in this name, but that it is the highest and deepest love and faithfulness, the greatest sweetness of the Deity, in the great name JEHOVAH, which He hath manifested in our humanity, corrupted as it is, and perished as to the heavenly part, which in paradise disappeared through sin. And He was therefore moved in His heart to flow into us with His sweet love, that the anger of His Father, which was kindled in us, might be quenched and turned into love by it.

All which was done for the poor sinner's sake, that he might obtain an open gate of grace again.

In this consideration he must firmly imagine to himself that this very hour and instant he standeth before the face of the Holy Trinity, and that God is really present within and without him, as the Holy Scripture witnesseth, saying, 'Am not I He that filleth all things?' And in another place, 'The word is near thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart.'—Also, 'We will come unto you and make our abode with you.' And, 'Behold, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.' And again, 'The kingdom of God is within you.'

Thus he must firmly know and believe that inwardly he standeth really before the face of Jesus Christ, even before the Holy Deity, on whom his soul hath turned its back; and must resolve that he will this very hour turn the eyes and desire of his soul towards God again, and with the

poor lost and returning son come to the Father. He must, with the eyes of his mind cast down in fear and deepest humility, begin to confess his sins and unworthiness before the face of God, in manner following.

A Short Form of Confession before the Face of God

Every one, as his case and necessity requireth, may order and enlarge this confession as the Holy Ghost shall teach him. I will only set down a short direction.

O THOU great unsearchable God, Lord of all things; Thou who, in Christ Jesus, of great love towards us, hast manifested thyself with thy holy substance in our humanity: I, poor unworthy sinful wretch, come before thy presence, which thou hast manifested in the

humanity of Jesus Christ, though I am not worthy to lift up mine eyes to thee, acknowledging and confessing before thee that I am guilty of unfaithfulness, and breaking off from thy great love and grace which thou hast freely bestowed upon us. I have left the covenant, which of mere grace thou hast made with me in Baptism, in which thou didst receive me to be a child and heir of eternal life, and have brought my desire into the vanity of this world, and defiled my soul therewith, and made it altogether bestial and earthly. So that my soul knoweth not itself, because of the mire of sin; but accounteth itself a strange child before thy face, not worthy to desire thy grace. I lie in the guilt and filth of sin, and the vanity of my corrupt flesh, up to the very lips of my soul, and have but a small spark of the living breath left in me which desireth thy grace. I am dead in sin and corruption, so that in this woeful condition I dare not lift up mine eyes to thee.

O God in Christ Jesus, thou who for poor sinners' sakes didst become man to help them, to thee I complain, to thee I have yet a spark of refuge in my soul. I have not regarded thy purchased inheritance, which thou hast purchased for us poor men by thy bitter death, but have made myself partaker of the heritage of vanity, in the anger of my Father in the curse of the earth, and am ensnared in sin, and half dead as to thy kingdom. I lie in feebleness as to thy strength, and the wrathful death waiteth for me. The devil hath poisoned me, so that I know not my Saviour: I am become a wild branch on thy tree, and have consumed, with the devil's swine, mine inheritance which is in thee. What shall I say before thee, who am not worthy of thy grace? I lie in the sleep of death which hath captivated me, and am fast bound with three strong chains. O thou breaker-through-death, assist me, I beseech thee, I cannot, I am able to do nothing!

I am dead in myself, and have no strength before thee, neither dare I for great shame lift up mine eyes unto thee. For I am the defiled keeper of swine, and have spent mine inheritance with the false adulterous whore of vanity in the lusts of the flesh; I have sought myself in my own lust, and not thee. Now in myself I am become a fool; I am naked and bare; my shame standeth before mine eyes; I cannot hide it; thy judgment waiteth for me. What shall I say before thee, who art the Judge of all the world? I have nothing to bring before thee.—Here I stand naked and bare in thy presence, and fall down before thy face bewailing my misery, and fly to thy great mercy, though I am not worthy of it; yet receive me but in thy death, and let me but die from my death in thine. Cast me down I pray thee to the ground in my innate self, and kill this self of mine through thy death, that I may live no more to myself, seeing I in myself work nothing but sin. There-

fore, I pray thee, cast down to the ground this wicked beast, which is full of false deceit and self-desire, and deliver this poor soul of mine from its heavy bonds.

O merciful God, it is owing to thy love and long-suffering that I lie not already in hell. I yield myself, with my whole will, senses and mind, unto thy grace, and fly to thy mercy. I call upon thee through thy death, from that small spark of life in me encompassed with death and hell, which open their throat against me and would wholly swallow me up in death; upon thee I call, who hast promised that thou wilt not quench the smoking flax. I have no other way to thee but by thy own bitter death and passion, because thou hast made our death life by thy humanity, and broken the chains of death, and therefore I sink the desire of my soul down into thy death, into the gate of thy death which thou hast broken open.

O thou great fountain of the love of

God, I beseech thee, help me, that I may die from my vanity and sin in the death of my Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

O thou breath of the great love of God, quicken I beseech thee my weak breath in me, that it may begin to hunger and thirst after thee. O Lord Jesus, thou sweet strength, I beseech thee give my soul to drink of thy fountain of grace, thy sweet water of eternal life, that it may awake from death and thirst after thee. O how extreme fainting I am for want of thy strength! O merciful God, do thou turn me I beseech thee, I cannot turn myself. O thou vanquisher of death, help me I pray thee to wrestle. How fast doth the enemy hold me with his three chains, and will not suffer the desire of my soul to come before thee! I beseech thee come and take the desire of my soul into thyself. Be thou my drawing to the Father, and deliver me from the devil's bonds! Look not upon my deformity in standing naked before thee, having lost thy garment!

I pray thee, do thou but clothe that breath which yet liveth in me and panteth after thy grace; and so shall I yet see thy salvation.

O thou deep love, I pray thee take the desire of my soul into thee: bring it forth out of the bonds of death through thy death, in thy Resurrection, in thee. O quicken me in thy strength, that my desire and will may begin to spring up and flourish anew. O thou vanquisher of death and of the wrath of God, do thou overcome self in me; break its will and bruise my soul, that it may fear before thee, and be ashamed of its own will before thy judgment, and that it may be ever obedient to thee as an instrument of thine. Subdue it in the bonds of death; take away its power, that it may will nothing without thee.

O God the Holy Ghost in Christ my Saviour, teach me, I pray thee, what I shall do, that I may turn to thee. O draw me in Christ to the Father, and help me, that now and from hence-

forward I may go forth from sin and vanity, and never any more enter into them again. Stir up in me a true sorrow for the sins I have committed. O keep me in thy bonds, and let me not loose from thee, lest the devil sift me in my wicked flesh and blood, and bring me again into the death of death. O enlighten thou my spirit, that I may see the divine path, and walk in it continually. O take that away from me which always turneth me away from thee; and give me that which always turneth me to thee: take me wholly from myself, and give me wholly to thyself. O let me begin nothing, let me will, think, and do nothing without thee. O Lord how long! Indeed I am not worthy of that which I desire of thee, I pray thee let the desire of my soul dwell but in the gates of thy courts; make it but a servant of thy servants. O preserve it from that horrible pit, wherein there is no comfort or refreshment.

O God in Christ Jesus. I am blind in myself, and know not myself for vanity. Thou art hidden from me in my blindness, and yet thou art near unto me; but thy wrath which my desire hath awakened in me hath made me dark. O take but the desire of my soul to thee; prove it, O Lord, and bruise it, that my soul may obtain a ray of thy sweet grace.

I lie before thee as a dying man, whose life is passing from his lips, as a small spark going out; kindle it, O Lord, and raise up the breath of my soul before thee. Lord, I wait for Thy promise, which thou hast made, saying, 'As I live, I will not the death of a sinner, but that he shall turn and live.' I sink myself down into the death of my Redeemer Jesus Christ, and wait for Thee, whose word is truth and life. Amen.

In this, or the like manner, every one may confess his sins, as he himself findeth on examining his conscience, what sins he hath brought his soul

into. Yet if his purpose be truly earnest, to use a form is needless, for the spirit of God, which at that instant is in the will of the mind, will itself make the prayer for him, in his interior. For it is the spirit of God which in a true earnest desire worketh repentance, and intercedeth for the soul before God, through the death of Christ.

But I will not hide from the beloved Reader, who hath a Christian intent, how it commonly useth to go with those who are in such a firm purpose and resolution. Though indeed it goeth otherwise with one than with another, according as his purpose is more or less earnest and strong. For the spirit of God is not bound, but useth divers ways or processes accordingly as he knoweth to be fittest for every one. Yet a soldier who hath been in the wars can tell how to fight, and instruct another who may happen to be in the like condition.

Now when such a heart with strong resolution and purpose doth thus come before God, and enter into repentance, it happeneth to it as to the Canaanitish woman; that is, it seems as if God would not hear. The heart remaineth without comfort; its sins, follies, and neglects, also present themselves before it, and make it feel itself unworthy of any. The mind is as it were speechless; the soul groaneth in the deep; the heart receiveth nothing, nor can so much as pour forth its confession before God; but it is as if the heart and soul were quite shut up. The soul would fain go towards God, but the flesh keepeth it captive: The devil, too, shutteth it up strongly, and representeth to it the way of vanity again, and tickleth it with the lusts of the flesh, and saith inwardly to it, 'Stay awhile; do this or that first; get a sufficiency of money or goods beforehand, that thou mayest not stand in need of the world, and afterwards enter into repentance and

a holy life; it will be time enough then.'

O how many hundreds perish in such a beginning, if they go back again into vanity; and become as young grafts broken off with the wind, or withered by the heat!

Beloved soul, mark: If thou wilt be a champion in thy Saviour Christ against death and hell, and wouldst have thy young graft grow, and become a tree in the kingdom of Christ, thou must go on, and stand fast in thy first earnest purpose. It is as much as thy paternal inheritance is worth, and thy body and soul too, whether thou becomest an angel in God, or a devil in hell. If thou wilt be crowned, thou must fight, thou must overcome in Christ, and not yield to the devil. Thy purpose must stand firm, thou must not prefer temporal honour and goods before it. When the spirit of the flesh saith, 'Stay awhile, it is not convenient yet'; then the soul must say, 'Now is the time for me to go

back again into my native country, out of which my father Adam hath brought me. No creature shall keep me back, and though thou earthly body shouldst thereby decay and perish, yet I will now enter with my will and whole desire, into the rose-garden of my Redeemer Jesus Christ, through His suffering and death into Him, and in the death of Christ subdue thee, thou earthly body, that hath swallowed up my pearl from me, which God gave to my father Adam in paradise. I will break the will of thy voluptuousness, which is in vanity, and bind thee as a mad dog, with the chain of my earnest purpose; and though thereby thou shouldst become a fool in the account of all men, yet thou must and shalt obey the firm resolve of my soul. Nothing shall unloose thee from this chain, but the temporal death. Whereunto God and his strength help me.'

A Short Direction

How the poor soul must come before God again, and how it must fight for the noble garland; what kind of weapons it must use, if it will go to war against God's anger, against the devil, the world and sin, against flesh and blood, against the influence of the stars and elements, and all its other enemies.

BELOVED soul, there is earnestness required to do this, and not a bare recital of words only! No, the earnest resolved will must drive on this work, else nothing will be effected. For if the soul will obtain the triumphal garland of Christ from the noble Sophia, or Divine Wisdom, it must woo her for it in great desire of love. It must entreat her in her most holy name for it, and come before her in most modest humility, and not like a lustful bull or a wanton Venus. For so long as any

are such, they must not seek these things; for they shall not obtain them, and though something should be obtained by those who are in such an impure state, it would be no more than a glimpse of the true glory. But a chaste and modest mind may prevail so far as to have the soul in its noble image, which died in Adam, quickened in the heavenly corporality as to the inward ground, and the precious garland set upon it. Yet if this should come to pass, it is taken off again from the soul, and laid by, as a crown useth to be, after a king is once crowned with it; it is then laid by and kept. So it cometh to pass also with the heavenly garland or gift. It is taken from the soul again, because the soul is yet encompassed with the house of sin; so that should it unhappily fall again, its crown might not be defiled. This is spoken plainly enough for the Children that know and have tried these things: None of the wicked are worthy to know more about them.

The Process, or Way

A MAN must bring a serious mind to this work. He must come before God with sincere earnestness, deep humility, and hearty sorrow for his sins, and with a deliberate and firm resolution not to enter any more into the old broad way of vanity. And though the whole world should account him a fool, and he should lose both honour and goods, nay, and the temporal life also, for the sake of his new choice, yet he must resolve firmly to abide by it.

If ever he will obtain the love and marriage of the noble Sophia, he must make such a vow as this in his purpose and mind. For Christ Himself saith: 'He that forsaketh not wife and children, brethren and sisters, money and goods, and all that he hath, and even his earthly life also, to follow me,

is not worthy of me.' Here Christ meaneth the mind of the soul; so that if there were anything that would keep the mind back from it, though it should have never so fair and glorious a pretence or show in this world, the mind must not regard it at all, but rather part with it than with the love of the noble virgin Sophia, in the bud and blossom of Christ, in His tender humanity in us as to the heavenly corporality. For this is the flower in Sharon, the rose in the valley of Jericho, wherewith Solomon delighted himself, and termed it his dear love, his chaste virgin which he loved; as indeed all other saints before and after him did; whosoever obtained her, called her his Pearl.

After what manner to pray for it, you may see by this short direction following. The work itself must be committed to the Holy Ghost, He formeth and frameth the prayer for the soul, in every heart wherein He is sought.

The Prayer

I, a poor unworthy creature, come before thee, O great and holy God, and lift up mine eyes to thee. Though I am not worthy, yet thy great mercy, and thy faithful promise in thy Word, have now encouraged me to lift the eyes of the desire of my soul up to thee. For my soul hath now laid hold on the Word of thy Promise, and received it into itself, and therewith cometh to thee. And though it is but a strange child which was disobedient unto thee, yet now it desireth to be obedient; and doth now infold itself with its desire into that Word which became man, which became flesh and blood, and hath broken sin and death in my humanity. Which hath changed the anger of God into love in the soul, hath deprived death of his power, and hell of its victory over soul and body;

and hath opened a gate for my soul to the clear face of thy strength and power. O great and most holy God, I have brought the hunger and desire of my soul into this most holy Word, and now I come before thee, and in my hunger call unto thee, Thou living fountain, through thy Word which became flesh and blood. Thy Word being made the life in our flesh, I receive it firmly into the desire of my soul as my own Life; and I pierce into thee with the desire of my soul through the Word in the flesh of Christ; through His holy conception in the Virgin Mary, His incarnation, His holy nativity, His baptism in Jordan, His temptation in the wilderness, where He overcame the kingdom of the devil and this world in the humanity. Through all His miracles, which He did on earth; through His reproach and ignominy, His innocent death and passion, the shedding of His blood, wherein God's anger in soul and flesh was drowned.

Through His rest in the sepulchre, when He awaked our father Adam out of his sleep, who was fallen into a dead sleep as to the kingdom of heaven. Through His love, which pierced through the anger and destroyed hell in the soul. Through His resurrection from the dead, His ascension, the sending of the Holy Spirit into our soul and spirit, and through all His promises; one of which is 'that thou, O God the Father, wilt give the Holy Spirit to them that ask it, in the name and through the Word which became man.'

O thou life of my flesh and of my soul in Christ my Brother, I beseech thee in the hunger of my soul, and entreat thee with all my powers, though they be weak, to give me what thou hast promised me, and freely bestow upon me in my Saviour Jesus Christ, His flesh for food and His blood for drink, to refresh my poor hungry soul, that it may be quickened, and strengthened in the Word which

became man, by which it may long and hunger after thee aright.

O thou deepest love in the most sweet name JESUS, give thyself into the desire of my soul. For therefore thou hast moved thyself, and according to thy great sweetness manifested thyself in the human nature, and called us to thee: we who hunger and thirst after thee, and hast promised us that thou wilt refresh us. I now open the lips of my soul to thee, O thou sweet truth; and though I am not worthy to desire it of thy holiness, yet I come to thee through thy bitter passion and death: thou having sprinkled my uncleanness with thy blood, and sanctified me in thy humanity, and made an open gate for me through thy death to thy sweet love in thy blood. Through thy five holy wounds, from which thou didst shed thy blood, I bring the desire of my soul into thy love.

O Jesus Christ, thou Son of God and man, I pray thee receive into thy-

self thy purchased inheritance, which thy Father hath given thee. I cry within me, that I may enter through thy holy blood and death into thee. Open thyself in me, that the spirit of my soul may reach thee, and receive thee into it. Lay hold on my thirst in me with thy thirst; bring thy thirst after us men, which thou hadst upon the cross, into my thirst, and give me thy blood to drink in my thirst. That my death in me which holdeth me captive may be drowned in the blood of thy love, and that my extinguished or suppressed image, which as to the kingdom of heaven disappeared in my father Adam through sin, may be made alive through thy powerful blood, and my soul clothed with it again as with the new body which dwelleth in heaven. In which image thy holy power and Word that became man dwelleth, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who dwelleth in us according to thy promise, saying, 'We will come to you, and make our abode with you.'

O thou great love of Jesus Christ, I can do no more than sink my desire into thee; thy Word which became man, is truth; since thou hast bidden me come, now I come. Be it unto me according to thy Word and will. Amen.

A Warning to the Reader

BELOVED Reader, out of love to thee, I will not conceal from thee what is here earnestly signified to me. If thou lovest the vanity of the flesh still, and art not in an earnest purpose on the way to the New Birth or regeneration, intending to become a new man, then leave the above-written words in these prayers unnamed; else they will turn to a judgment of God in thee. Thou must not take the holy names in vain, thou art faithfully warned: They belong to the thirsty soul. But if thy soul

be in earnest, it shall find by experience what words they are.

A Direction

How the soul must meet its Beloved, when she knocketh in its centre, or closed inner-chamber.

BELOVED soul, if thou wilt be earnest without intermission, thou shalt certainly obtain the favour of a kiss from the noble Sophia (or Divine Wisdom) in the holy name JESUS; for she standeth ever before the door of the soul, knocking, and warning the sinner of his wicked way. Now if he once thus desireth her love, she is ready for him, and kisseth him with the beams of her sweet love, from whence the heart receiveth joy. But she doth not presently unite herself with the soul, that is, she doth not presently awaken the extinguished heavenly image in herself, which disappeared in Adam in paradise. No,

there might be danger to man in that; for if Adam and Lucifer fell, having it manifested in them, the same may easily happen to man, who is still so strongly enthralled in vanity.

The bond of thy promise must be firm and steadfast. Before she will crown thee; thou must be tempted and tried: She taketh the beams of her love from thee again, to see whether thou wilt prove faithful; also she letteth thee stand as it were aloof, and answereth thee not so much as with one look of her love. For before she will crown thee thou must be judged, that thou mayest taste the bitter potion of dregs, which thou hast filled for thyself in thine abominations. Thou must come before the gates of hell, first, and there shew forth thy victory for her in her love, in that strength wherewith she upheld thee in opposition to the devil's malign influence.

Christ was tempted in the wilderness, and if thou wilt put on Him, thou

must go through His whole progress or journey, even from His incarnation to His ascension. And though thou art not able, nor required to do that which He hath done; yet thou must enter wholly into His process, and therein die continually from the corruption of the soul. For the virgin Sophia espouseth not herself to the soul, except in this property which springeth up in the soul through the death of Christ, as a new plant standing in heaven. The earthly body cannot comprehend her in his lifetime, for it must first die from the corruptible vanity; but the heavenly image which disappeared in Adam, viz., the true Seed of the Woman wherein God became man, and into which He brought His living seed, the heavenly substantiality, is capable of the Pearl, after the manner wherein it came to pass in Mary, in the end or fulfilling of the covenant.

Therefore, take heed what thou doest; When thou hast made thy promise, keep it; and then she will

crown thee more readily than thou wouldst be crowned. But thou must be sure, when the tempter cometh to thee with the pleasure, beauty, and glory of the world, that thy mind reject it and say, 'I must be a servant and not a master in the vineyard of Christ; I am but a steward of God in and over all that I have, and I must do with it as his Word teacheth me; my heart must sit down with the simple and lowly, in the dust, and be always humble.' Whatsoever state and condition thou art in, humility must be in the front, or else thou wilt not obtain the noble virgin in marriage. The free will of thy soul must stand the brunt as a champion; for if the devil cannot prevail against the soul with vanity, nor catch it with that bait, then he cometh with its unworthiness and catalogue of sins. And there thou must fight hard, and the merits of Christ must be set in the front, or else the creature cannot prevail against the devil. For in this

conflict it goeth so terribly with many a poor sinner, that outward reason thinketh him to be distracted, or possessed by an evil spirit. The devil defendeth himself so horribly in some, especially if he hath had a great fort of prey in them, that he must be stoutly assaulted before he will depart and leave his castle. In this kind of combat heaven and hell are fighting one against the other.

Now if the soul continue constant, and getteth the victory over the devil in all his assaults, disesteeming all temporal things for the love of its noble Sophia, then the precious garland will be set upon it for a token or ensign of victory.

Here the virgin (which manifesteth herself in the dear name of JESUS CHRIST, the Treader upon the Serpent, God's Anointed) cometh to the soul, and kisseth it with her sweetest love in the essence, most inwardly, and impresseth her love into its desire for a token of victory. And

here Adam in his heavenly part riseth again from death in Christ. Of which I cannot write, for there is no pen in this world that can express it! It is the wedding of the Lamb, where the noble Pearl is sown with very great triumph, though in the beginning it be small, like a grain of mustard-seed, as Christ saith.

Now when the wedding is over, the soul must take heed that this pearl-tree or tree of faith spring and grow, as it hath promised the virgin. For then the devil will presently come with his furious storm, the ungodly people, who will scoff at, contemn, and cry down this way for madness; and then a man must enter into the process of Christ, under His cross. Here it will appear indeed and in truth, what sort of a Christian he is. For he must suffer himself to be proclaimed a fool and ungodly wretch; nay his greatest friends, who favoured him, or flattered him in the lusts of the flesh, will now be his enemies, and though they know

not why, will hate him. Thus it is that Christ hideth his bride wholly under the cross, that she may not be known in this world; The devil also striveth that these children may be hidden from the world, lest haply many such branches should grow in that garden which he supposeth to be his.

This I have set down for the information of the Christian-minded Reader, that he may know what to do, if the same should befall him.

A very earnest Prayer in Temptation

Against God's anger in the conscience, and also against flesh and blood, when the temptation cometh to the soul, and wrestleth with it.

MOST deep love of God in Christ Jesus, leave me not in this distress. I confess I am guilty of the sins which now rise up

in my mind and conscience; and if thou forsake me I must perish. But hast thou not promised me in thy Word, saying, If a mother could forget her child, which can hardly be, yet thou wilt not forget me? Thou hast set me as a sign in thine hands which were pierced through with sharp nails, and in thy open side whence blood and water gushed out. Poor wretch that I am, I am caught in thy anger, and can in my ability do nothing before thee; I sink myself down into thy wounds and death.

O great mercy of God, I beseech thee deliver me from the bonds of Satan. I have no refuge in anything, but only in thy holy wounds and death! Into thee I sink down in the anguish of my conscience, do with me what thou wilt. In thee I will now live or die, as pleaseth thee, let me but die and perish in thy death; do but bury me into thy death, that the anguish of hell may not touch me. How can I excuse myself before thee,

that knowest my heart and reins, and settest my sins before mine eyes? I am guilty of them, and yield myself unto thy judgment; accomplish thy judgment upon me, through the death of my Redeemer Jesus Christ.

I fly unto thee, thou righteous judge, through the anguish of my Redeemer Jesus Christ, when He did sweat the bloody sweat on the Mount of Olives for my sake, and was scourged by Pontius Pilate for me, and suffered a crown of thorns to be pressed upon His head, so that His blood came forth.

O righteous God, hast thou not set Him in my stead? He was innocent, but I guilty, for whom He suffered, wherefore should I despair under thy wrath? O blot out thy anger in me through His anguish, passion and death; I give myself wholly into His anguish, passion and death; I will stand still in His anguish and passion before thee, do with me what thou pleasest, only let me not depart from His anguish. Thou hast freely given

me His anguish, and drowned thy wrath in Him: And though I have not accepted it, but am departed from Him and become faithless, yet thou hast given me this precious pledge in my flesh and blood. For He hath taken my flesh and soul upon His heavenly flesh and blood, and hath satisfied the anger in my flesh and soul in Him, with His heavenly blood. Therefore receive me now in His satisfaction, and put His anguish, passion and death in thy wrath, which is kindled in me, and break thy judgment in me in the blood of His love.

O great Love! in the blood and death of Jesus Christ, I beseech thee break the strong fort of prey which the devil hath made and built up in me, where he resisteth me in the way of thy grace. Drive him out of me, that he may not overcome me; for no one living can stand in thy sight, if thou withdraw thy hand from him.

O come, thou breaker-through the anger of God, destroy its power, and

help my poor soul to fight and overcome it. O bring me into victory, and uphold me in thee; break in pieces its seat in my vanity, that is kindled in my soul and flesh. O mortify the desire of my vanity in flesh and blood, which the devil hath now kindled by his false desire, by hellish anguish and desperation. O quench it with thy water of eternal life, and bring my anguish forth through thy death. I wholly sink myself down into thee; and though soul and body should this hour faint and perish in thy wrath, yet I will not let thee go. Though my heart saith utterly, No, No, yet the desire of my soul shall hold fast on thy truth, which neither death nor the devil shall take away from me. For the 'Blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth us from all our sins.' This I lay hold on, and let the anger of God do what it will with my sin, and let the devil roar over my soul in his fort of prey which he hath made, as much as he will: Neither the devil,

death nor hell, shall pull me out of my Saviour's wounds. Thou must at length be confounded in me, thou malicious devil, and thy fort of prey must be forsaken, for I will drown it in the love of Jesus Christ; and then dwell in it if thou canst. Amen.

An Information in Temptation

BELOVED Reader, this is no jesting matter; he that accounteth it so, hath not tried it, neither hath he yet passed the judgment; but his conscience is still asleep. And though it should be deferred to his latter days, which is very dangerous, yet he must pass through this judgment, or fiery trial. Happy is he that passeth through it in the time of his youth, before the devil buildeth his fort of prey strong; he may afterwards prove a labourer in the heavenly vineyard, and sow his

seed in the garden of Christ; where he shall reap the fruit in due time. This judgment continueth a long while upon many a poor soul; several years, if he doth not earnestly and early put on the armour of Christ; but stayeth till the judgment of tribulation first drive him to repentance. But to him that cometh of himself, of his own earnest purpose, and endeavoureth to depart from his evil ways, the temptation or trial will not be so hard, neither will it continue so long. Yet he must stand out valiantly, until victory be gotten over the devil; for he shall be mightily assisted, and all shall end in the best for him.—So that afterwards when the day breaketh in his soul, he turneth it to the great praise and glory of God, that his grand enemy and persecutor was overcome in the conflict.

Short Prayers

When the noble Sophia (or eternal Wisdom) kisseth the soul with her love, and offereth her love to it.

O MOST gracious and deep love of God in Christ Jesus! I beseech thee grant me thy Pearl, impress it into my soul, and take my soul into thy arms.

O thou sweet Love! I confess I am unclean before thee. Take away my uncleanness through thy death, and carry the hunger and thirst of my soul through thy death in thy resurrection, in thy triumph! Cast my whole selfhood down to the ground in thy death: take it captive, and carry my hunger through in thy hunger.

O Highest Love, hast thou not appeared in me? Stay in me, and inclose me in thee. Keep me in thee, so that I may not be able to depart from thee. Fill my hunger with thy

love, feed my soul with thy heavenly substance, give it thy blood to drink, and water it with thy fountain.

O great Love! Awaken my disappeared image in me, which as to the kingdom of heaven disappeared in my father Adam. By that Word which awakened the same image in the Seed of the Woman in Mary, quicken it, I beseech thee.

O thou life and power of the Deity, who hast promised us saying: 'We will come to you, and make our abode in you.' O sweet Love! I bring my desire into this Word of thy promise. Thou hast promised also, that thy Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him for it; therefore I now bring the desire of my soul into that thy promise, and I receive thy Word into my hunger. Increase thou in me my hunger after thee. Strengthen me, O sweet Love, in thy strength: Quicken me in thee, that my spirit may taste thy sweetness. O do thou believe by thy power

in me, for without thee I can do nothing.

O sweet Love! I beseech thee through that love wherewith thou didst overcome the anger of God, and didst change it into love and divine joy; I pray thee, also change the anger in my soul by the same great love, that I may become obedient unto thee, and that my soul may love thee therein for ever. O change my will into thy will, bring thy obedience into my disobedience, that I may become obedient unto thee.

O great love of Jesus Christ, I humbly fly to thee, bring the hunger of my soul into thy wounds, from whence thou didst shed thy holy blood, and didst quench the anger with love. I bring my hunger into thy open side, from whence came forth water and blood, and throw myself wholly into it; be thou mine and quicken me in thy life, and let me not depart from thee.

O my noble Vine, I beseech thee give

sap to me thy branch; that I may bud and grow in thy strength and sap, in thy essence; beget in me true strength by thy strength.

O sweet Love, art thou not my light? Enlighten thou my poor soul in its close prison, in flesh and blood. Bring it into the right way. Destroy the will of the devil, and bring my body through the whole course of this world, through the chamber of death, into thy death and rest; that at the last day it may arise in thee from thy death, and live in thee forever. O teach me what I must do in thee: I beseech thee be thou my willing, knowing, and doing, and let me go no whither without thee. I yield myself wholly up to thee. Amen.

A Prayer

For obtaining the divine working, protection, and government; shewing also how the mind should work with and in God, in Christ the Tree of Life.

O THOU Living Fountain, in thee I lift up the desire of my soul, and cry with my desire to enter through the life of my Saviour Jesus Christ into thee.

O thou Life and Power of God, awaken thyself in the hunger of my soul with thy desire of love, through the thirst which Jesus Christ had upon the cross after us men, and carry my weak strength through by thy mighty hand in thy spirit; be thou the working and will in me with thine own strength. Blossom in the strength of Jesus Christ in me, that I may bring forth praise unto thee, the true fruit of thy kingdom.

O let my heart and desire never depart from thee more.

But I swim in vanity, in this valley of misery, in this outward earthly flesh and blood. And my soul and noble image, which is according to thy similitude, is encompassed with enemies on every side; with the desire of the devil against me, with the desire of vanity in flesh and blood; also with all the opposition of wicked men who know not thy name. And I swim with my outward life in the properties of the stars and elements, having my enemies lying in wait for me everywhere, inwardly and outwardly, together with death, the destroyer of this vain life. I fly therefore to thee, O holy strength of God, seeing thou hast manifested thyself with thy loving mercy in our humanity, through thy holy name *Jesus*, and hast also given it to be a companion and guide in us. I beseech thee let His angels that minister to Him, attend upon the souls of me and mine, and encamp

themselves about us, and defend us from the fiery darts of the desire of that wicked one, which he shooteth into us daily by the curse of the anger of God which is awakened in our earthly flesh. Keep back by thy divine strength the malignant influence of the stars in their opposition; wherein the wicked enemy of mankind mingleth himself with his desire and imagination, in order to poison us in soul and flesh, and to bring us into false and evil desires, as also into infirmity and misery. Turn away these evil influences by thy holy power *Jesus* from our souls and spirits, that they may not touch us; and let thy good and holy angel stand by us to turn away their noxious effects from our bodies.

O great Love and sweet Strength *Jesus*, thou Fountain of Divine Sweetness, flowing out of the great eternal name JEHOVAH, I cry with the desire of my soul to come into thee. My soul crieth to come into that spirit, from which it was breathed into the

body, and which hath formed it in the likeness of God. It desireth in its thirst to get the sweet fountain which springeth from JEHOVAH into itself, to refresh God's breath of fire, which itself is, that so the sweet love of JESUS may rise in its breath of fire, through the fountain JESUS springing out of JEHOVAH. That CHRIST the Holy One may be manifested and become man in my disappeared image of heavenly spiritual corporeality, and that my poor soul may receive its beloved bride again into its arms, with whom it may rejoice for ever.

O IMMANUEL! Thou Wedding-Chamber, God and Man, I yield myself up into the arms of thy desire towards us, in us; it is Thyself whom I desire. O blot out in me the anger of thy Father with thy love, and manifest thy strength in my weakness, that I may overcome and tame the evil of flesh and blood, and serve thee in holiness and righteousness.

O thou great and most holy name and majesty of God, JEHOVAH, which hast stirred thyself with thy most sweet power JESUS, in the limit of the covenanted promise to our father Adam, in the Woman's Seed; in the Virgin Mary, in our disappeared heavenly humanity, and brought the living essentiality of thy holy power in the Virgin Wisdom of God, into our humanity, which was extinguished as to thee; and hast given it to us, to be our life, regeneration, and victory; I entreat thee with all my strength, beget a new holy life in me, by thy sweet power JESUS, that I may be in thee and thou in me; that so thy kingdom may be made manifest in me, and the will and conversation of my soul may be in heaven.

O great and incomprehensible GOD, thou who fillest all things, be thou my heaven in which my New Birth in CHRIST JESUS may dwell: Let my spirit be the stringed instrument, harmony, sound, and joy of thy Holy

Spirit. Strike the strings in me, in thy regenerate image, and carry through my harmony into thy divine kingdom of joy, in the great love of God, in the wonders of thy glory and majesty, in the communion of the holy angelical harmony. Build up the holy city Zion in me, in which as children of Christ we all live together in one city, which is Christ in us. Into thee I wholly plunge myself, do with me what thou pleasest. Amen.

A Prayer

To be used by a soul in tribulation under the cross of Christ, when it is assaulted by its outward enemies; who persecute and hate it for being in the spirit of Christ, and slander and reproach it as an evil-doer.

POOR man that I am; I walk full of anguish and trouble in my return towards my native country, from whence I wandered in

Adam, and am going back again through the thistles and thorns of this troublesome world. O God my Father, the briars tear me on every side, and I am afflicted and despised by my enemies. They scorn my soul, and revile it as an evil-doer, who hath broken faith with them; they deride my walking towards thee, and account it foolish. They think I am senseless, because I walk in this strait and thorny path, and go not along with them in their hypocritical broad way.

O Lord Jesus Christ; I fly to thee under the cross: O dear Immanuel, receive me, and carry me into thyself, through the path of thy pilgrimage, in which thou didst walk in this world; namely through thy incarnation, poverty, reproach and scorn; also through thy anguish, passion and death. Make me conformable unto thy example; send thy good angel along with me to shew me the way through the horrible thorny wilder-

ness of this world. Assist me in my misery; comfort me with that comfort wherewith the angel comforted thee in the Garden, when thou didst pray to thy Father, and didst sweat great drops of blood. Support me in my anguish and persecution, under the reproach of the devils and all wicked men, who know not thee, and refuse to walk in thy paths. O great love of God, they know not thy way, and do this in blindness, through the deceit of the devil. Have pity on them, and bring them out of their darkness into thy light, that they may learn to know themselves, and how they lie captive in the filth and mire of the devil, in a dark dungeon fast bound with three chains. O great God, have mercy upon Adam and his children, redeem them in Christ the new Adam.

I fly to thee, O Christ, God and man, in this pilgrimage and journey which I must take through this dark valley, despised and troubled on all sides,

and accounted an ungodly wicked man. O Lord, it is thy judgment upon me; that my sins and inbred corruption may be judged in this earthly pilgrimage before thee, and I as a curse be made an open spectacle, on which thy anger may satiate itself, and thereby may take the eternal reproach away from me. It is the token of thy love; by which thou bringest me into the reproach, anguish, suffering and death of my Saviour Jesus Christ, that so I may die from vanity and spring up in His spirit with a new life, through His reproach, ignominy, and death.

I beseech thee, O Christ, thou patient Lamb of God, grant me patience in this my way of the cross, through all thy anguish and reproach, thy death and passion, thy scorn and contempt upon the cross, where thou wast despised in my stead; and bring me therein, as a patient lamb to thee, into thy victory. Let me live with thee in thee: and do thou convert my

persecutors, who (unknown to themselves) by their reproaching sacrifice my vanity and inbred sins before thy anger. They know not what they do; they think they do me harm, but they do me good! They do that for me which I should do myself before thee. For I should daily lay open and acknowledge my shame and vileness before thee, and thereby sink myself down into the death of thy beloved Son, that my shame might die in his death. But I being too negligent, weary, faint, and feeble, therefore thou usest these mine enemies in thy anger, to open and discover my vileness before thee, which thy wrath taketh hold of, and sinketh it down into the death of my Saviour.

O merciful God, my vain flesh cannot know how well thou intendest towards me, when thou sufferest mine enemies to take my vileness from me, and sacrifice it before thee. My earthly mind supposeth that thou afflictest me for my sins, and I am

extremely perplexed at it; but thy spirit, in my inward new man, telleth me, that it is of thy love towards me, and that thou intendest good to me by it. When thou sufferest my enemies to persecute me, it is best for me that they perform the work in my stead, and unfold my sins before thee in thy anger, that it may swallow up the guilt of them, so that they may not follow me into my native country. For mine enemies are strong and mighty still in thy anger, and therefore can do it better than I that am feeble and fainting already in the will of vanity. This thou knowest full well, O thou righteous God. I beseech thee therefore, O righteous God, since thou usest them as friends to me, to do so good an office for me, though my earthly reason knoweth it not, that thou wouldst make them also to understand and follow my course, and send them such friends in turn. But first bring them to the light, that they may know thee, and give thee thanks.

O merciful God in Christ Jesus, I beseech thee, out of thy deep love towards us poor men, which thou hast manifested in me, in the hidden man, call us all in thee, to thee. O stir thyself in us yet once again in this last trouble; thy anger being kindled in us, do thou resist it, lest it swallow us up wholly both soul and body.

O thou Dawning of the Day-spring of God, break forth to the full! art thou not already risen? Manifest thy holy city Zion, thy holy Jerusalem, in us. O great God! I see thee in the depth of thy power and strength. Awaken me wholly in thee, that I may be quickened in thee. Break off the tree of thy anger in us, and let thy love spring forth and bud in us. O Lord, I lie down in thy sight, and beseech thee not to rebuke us in thine anger. Are we not thy possession which thou hast purchased? Forgive all of us our sins, and deliver us from the evil of thy wrath, and from the

malice and envy of the devil; and bring us under thy cross in patience into paradise again. Amen.

Here followeth a Prayer or Dialogue between the poor soul and the noble Virgin Sophia, in the inward ground of man, viz., *between the Spirit of Christ in the New Birth, out of his humanity in us, and the soul. Shewing how great a joy there is in the heaven of the New Regenerate Man; and how lovingly and graciously the noble Sophia presenteth herself to her bridegroom the soul, when it entereth into repentance, and how the soul behaveth itself towards her, when she appeareth to it.*

The Gates of the Paradisical Garden of Roses

This is understood by none but the children of Christ, who have known it by experience.

WHEN Christ the Corner-stone stirreth Himself in the extinguished image of man, in his hearty conversion and repentance; then Virgin Sophia appeareth in the stirring of the spirit of Christ, in the extinguished image, in her virgin's attire before the soul. At which the soul is so amazed and astonished in its uncleanness, that all its sins immediately awake in it, and it trembleth before her. For then the judgment passeth upon the sins of the soul, so that it even goeth back in its unworthiness, being ashamed

in the presence of its fair love, and entereth into itself, feeling and acknowledging itself utterly unworthy to receive such a jewel. This is understood by those who are of our tribe, and have tasted of this heavenly gift, and by none else. But the noble Sophia draweth near in the essence of the soul, and kisseth it in friendly manner, and tinctureth its dark fire with her rays of love, and shineth through it with her bright and powerful influence. Penetrated with the strong sense and feeling of which, the soul skippeth in its body for great joy, and in the strength of this virgin love, exulteth, and praiseth the great God, for His blessed gift of grace.

I will set down here a short description how it is when the bride thus embraceth the bridegroom, for the consideration of the Reader, who perhaps hath not yet been in this wedding-chamber. It may be, he will be desirous to follow us, and to enter into the inner-choir, where the soul

joineth hands and danceth with Sophia or the Divine Wisdom.

When that which is mentioned above cometh to pass, the soul rejoiceth in its body, and saith,

PRAISE, thanksgiving, strength, honour, and glory be to thee, O great God, in thy power and sweetness, for that thou hast redeemed me from the anguish of the fiery driver. O thou fair Love! My heart embraceth thee; where hast thou been so long? Methought I was in hell in the anger of God. O gracious Love! abide with me, I beseech thee, and be my joy and comfort. Lead me in the right way. I give myself up into thy love. I am dark before thee, do thou enlighten me. O noble Love, give me thy sweet Pearl; put it I pray thee into me.

O great God in Christ Jesus, I praise and magnify thee now in thy truth, in thy great power and glory, for that thou hast forgiven me my sins, and

filled me with thy strength. I shout for joy before thee in my new life, and extol thee in thy firmament of heaven, which none can open but thy spirit in thy mercy. My bones rejoice in thy strength, and my heart delighteth itself in thy love. Thanks be to thee for ever, for that thou hast delivered me out of hell, and turned death into life in me. O sweet Love! Let me not depart from thee again. Grant me thy Garland of Pearl, and abide in me. O be my own proper possession, that I may rejoice in thee for ever.

Upon this, Virgin Sophia saith to the soul,

MY noble bridegroom, my strength and power, thou art a thousand times welcome. Why hast thou forgotten me so long, that I have been constrained in great grief to stand without the door and knock? Have I not always called thee and entreated thee? But thou hast turned away thy countenance from me, and thine ears have declined

my entreaties. Thou couldst not see my light, for thou didst walk in the valley of darkness. I was very near thee, and entreated thee continually, but thy sinfulness held thee captive in death, so that thou knewest me not. I came to thee in great humility and called thee, but thou wert rich in the power of the anger of God, and didst not regard my humility and lowliness. Thou hast taken the devil to be thy paramour, who hath defiled thee thus, and built up his fort of prey in thee, and turned thee quite away from my love and faith into his hypocritical kingdom of falsehood; wherein thou hast committed much sin and wickedness, and torn thy will off from my love. Thou hast broken the bond of wedlock, and set thy love and affection upon a stranger, and suffered me thy bride, whom God did give thee, to stand alone in the extinguished substance, without the power of thy fiery strength. I could not be joyful without thy fiery strength, for thou art my

husband; my shining brightness is made manifest by thee. Thou canst manifest my hidden wonders in thy fiery life, and bring them into majesty; and yet without me thou art but a dark house, wherein is nothing but anguish, misery, and horrible torment.

O noble bridegroom, stand still with thy countenance towards me, and give me thy rays of fire. Bring thy desire into me, and enkindle me thereby, and then I will bring the rays of my love, from my meekness into thy fiery essence, and be united with thee for ever.

O my bridegroom, how well am I, now I am in union with thee? O kiss me with thy desire in thy strength and power, and then I will shew thee all my beauty, and will rejoice and solace myself with thy sweet love and shining brightness in thy fiery life. All the holy angels rejoice with us, to see us united again. My dear Love, I now entreat thee to abide in my faith, and do not turn thy face away from me any

more. Work thou thy wonders in my love, for which purpose God hath created thee and brought thee into being.

The soul saith again to its noble Sophia, its Love, that is born again in it,

O MY noble Pearl, and opened flame of light in my anxious fiery life, how thou changest me into thy joy! O beautiful Love, I have broken my faith with thee, in my father Adam, and with my fiery strength have turned myself to the pleasure and vanity of the outward world. I have fallen in love with a stranger, and had been constrained to walk in the valley of darkness in this strange love, if thou hadst not come into the house of my misery, in thy great faithfulness, by thy piercing through and destroying God's anger, hell, and dark death, and restored thy meekness and love to my fiery life.

O sweet Love; thou hast brought the water of eternal life out of the

fountain of God, with thee into me, and refreshed me in my great thirst, I behold in thee the mercy of God, which was hidden from me before by the strange love. In thee I can rejoice; thou changest my anguish of fire into great joy in me. O amiable Love, give me thy Pearl, that I may continue in this joy for ever.

Upon this the noble Sophia answereth the soul again, and saith,

MY dear love and faithful treasure, thou highly rejoicest me in thy beginning. I have indeed broken into thee through the deep gates of God, through God's anger, through hell and death, into the house of thy misery; and have graciously bestowed my love upon thee, and delivered thee from the chains and bonds wherewith thou wast fast bound. I have kept my faith with thee, though thou hast not kept thine with me. But thou desirest now an exceeding great thing of me,

which I cannot willingly trust in thy hands.—Thou wouldest have my Pearl as thy proper own. Remember, I pray, O my beloved bridegroom, that thou didst carelessly lose it before in Adam; and thou thyself standest yet in great danger, and walkest in two dangerous kingdoms. For in thy original fire, thou walkest in that country wherein God calleth Himself a strong jealous God, and a consuming fire. The other kingdom which thou walkest in, is the outward world, wherein thou dwellest in the vain corrupt flesh and blood, and where the pleasures of the world and the assaults of the devil beset thee every hour. Thou mayest perhaps in thy great joy bring earthliness again into my beauty, and thereby darken my Pearl. Or thou mayest possibly grow proud, as Lucifer did, when he had the Pearl in his possession, and so turn thyself away from the harmony of God, as he did, and then I must be deprived of my love for ever afterwards.

No. I will keep my Pearl in myself, and dwell in the heaven in thee, in thy extinguished, but now in me, revived, humanity; and reserve my Pearl for paradise, until thou puttest away this earthliness from thee, and then I will give it thee to possess. But I will readily present to thee my pleasant countenance, and the sweet rays of the Pearl, during the time of this earthly life. I will dwell with the Pearl itself in the inner choir, and be thy faithful loving bride. I cannot espouse myself with thy earthly flesh, for I am a heavenly queen, and my kingdom is not of this world. Yet I will not cast thy outward life away, but refresh it often with my rays of love; for thy outward humanity shall return again. But I cannot admit to my embraces the beast of vanity, neither did God create it in Adam with a purpose to have it so gross and earthly. But in Adam thy desire, through the power of its strong lust, formed this bestial grossness from and

with all the essences of the awakened vanity of the earthly property, wherein heat and cold, pain and enmity, division and corruption, subsist.

Now, my dear love and bridegroom, do but yield thyself up into my will; I will not forsake thee in this earthly life in thy danger. Though the anger of God should pass upon thee, so that thou shouldst grow affrighted and disheartened, or shouldst think that I had deserted thee, yet I will be with thee and preserve thee, for thou thyself knowest not what thine office is. Thou must in this life's time work and bear fruit. Thou art the root of this Pearl-Tree; branches must be produced out of thee, which must all be brought forth in anguish. But I come forth together with thy branches in their sap, and produce fruit upon thy boughs, and thou knowest it not; for the Most High hath so ordered, that I should dwell with and in thee.

Wrap thyself up therefore in

patience, and take heed of the pleasure of the flesh. Break the will and desire thereof; bridle it as an unruly horse. And then I will often visit thee in the fiery essence, and give thee my kiss of love. I will bring a garland for thee out of paradise with me, as a token of my affection, and put it upon thee, and thou shalt rejoice in it. But I give thee not my Pearl for a possession during this life's time. Thou must continue in resignation, and hearken what the Lord playeth on His instrument in thy harmony in thee. Moreover, thou must give sound and essence to thy tune out of my strength and virtue, for thou art now a messenger of His Word, and must set forth His praise and glory.—For this cause it is that I have contracted myself anew with thee, and set my triumphal garland upon thee; which I have gotten in the battle against the devil and death. But the Crown of Pearl wherewith I crowned thee, I have laid aside for thee. Thou must wear

that no more till thou art become pure in my sight.

The soul saith further to the noble Sophia,

O THOU fair and sweet consort, what shall I say before thee? Let me be wholly committed unto thee, I cannot preserve myself. If thou wilt not give me thy Pearl, I submit to thy will; but give me thy rays of love, and carry me safely through my pilgrimage. Do thou awaken and bring forth what thou wilt in me; I will from henceforth be thy own. I will or desire nothing for myself, but what thou thyself wilt through me. I had fooled away thy sweet love and broken my faith with thee, whereby I was fallen into the anger of God. But seeing that of love thou didst come to me into the anguish of hell, and hast delivered me from torment, and received me again for thy consort, I will now therefore break my will for thy love's sake, and be obedient unto thee, and

wait for thy love. I am satisfied now that I know thou art with me in all my troubles, and wilt not forsake me.

O gracious Love, I turn my fiery countenance to thee. O fair Crown, take me quickly into thee, and bring me forth from unquietness: I will be thine forever, and never depart from thee more.

The noble Sophia answereth the soul very comfortably, and saith,

MY noble bridegroom, be of good comfort. I have betrothed thee to me in my highest love, and contracted myself with thee in my faithfulness. I will be with thee and in thee always, to the end of the world. I will come to thee and make my abode with thee, in thy inner chamber. Thou shalt drink of my fountain; for now I am thine, and thou art mine, the enemy shall not separate us. Work thou in thy fiery property, and I will put my rays of

love into thy working. And so we will plant and fertilize the vineyard of Jesus Christ. Afford thou the essence of fire, and I will afford the essence of light, and the increase. Be thou the fire, and I will be the water, and thus we will perform that in this world for which God hath appointed us, and serve Him in His temple, which we ourselves are. Amen.

To the Reader

BELOVED Reader, count not this an uncertain fiction; it is the true ground, sum and substance of all the Holy Scriptures. For the Book of the Life of Jesus Christ is plainly set forth therein, as the author of a certainty knoweth; it being the Way that he himself hath gone. He giveth thee the best jewel that he hath. God grant His blessing with it. A heavy sentence and judgment are gone forth against the

mocker of this. Be thou therefore warned, that thou mayest avoid the danger, and obtain the benefit.

A Morning Prayer

Commending ourselves to God when we rise, before we suffer any other thing to enter into us.

BLESS me, O God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, thou only true God. I thank thee through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, for thy preservation of me, and for all other benefits. I now commend myself, both soul and body, and all that thou hast set me to do in my employment or calling, into thy protection. Be thou the beginning of my conceptions, my undertakings, and all my doings. Work thou so in me, that I may begin all things to the glory of thy name, and accomplish them in thy love for the good and service of my neighbour. Send thy

holy angel along with me, to turn the temptations of the devil and corrupt nature away from me. Preserve me from the malice of evil men, make all my enemies reconcilable to me, and bring my mind into thy vineyard, that I may labour in my office and employment, and behave as thy obedient servant therein. Bless me, and all that I am to go about and do this day, with the blessing of thy love and mercy. Continue thy grace and love in Jesus Christ upon me, and give me a mind cheerfully to follow thy leadings and execute thine appointment. Let thy Holy Spirit guide me in my beginning, and my progress, on to my last end, and be the willing, working, and accomplishing of all in me. Amen.

An Evening Prayer

When we have finished our daily employment, and are going to rest.

I LIFT my heart to thee, O God, thou Fountain of Eternal Life, and give thee thanks through Jesus Christ thy beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour, for having protected and preserved me this day from all mischief that might have befallen me. I commend to thy disposal my condition and employment, together with the work of my hands, and humbly repose them on thee. So fill my soul with thy spirit, that neither that grand enemy the devil, nor any other evil influence or desire, may find harbour therein. Let my mind only delight in thee in thy temple, and let thy good angel stay with me, that I may rest safely in thy power, and under thy protection. Amen.

Revelation xxi. 6. 'I am Alpha and

Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give unto him that is athirst, of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.'

THE SECOND BOOK.

OF

TRUE RESIGNATION,

SHEWING

How Man must daily die to his own Will in Self; how he must bring his Desire into GOD, and what he should ask and desire of GOD. Likewise How he must spring up out of the dying sinful Man, with a new Mind and Will through the Spirit of Christ.

ALSO,

What the Old and New Man are, and what each of them is in Life, Will, and Practice.

Written in the German Language,

(Anno 1622)

By JACOB BOEHME.

JESUS said, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.—**Matt. xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix. 23; John xii. 26.**

Peter said to Jesus, Behold, We have forsaken All, and followed thee.—**Matt. xix. 27; Mark x. 28; Luke xviii. 28.**

OF TRUE RESIGNATION

CHAPTER I

WE have a clear example in Lucifer, and also in Adam the first man, of what self doth, when it getteth the light of nature to be its own, and may walk with the understanding in its own dominion. We see also in men learned in arts and sciences, that when they get the light of this outward world or nature into the possession of their reason, nothing cometh of it but pride of themselves. And yet all the world so vehemently desireth and seeketh after this light as the best treasure; and indeed it is the best treasure this world affords, if it be rightly used.

2. But while self, viz., reason, is captivated and fast bound in a close and strong prison, that is to say, in the anger of God, and in earthliness; it is very dangerous for a man to make use of the light of knowledge in self, as if it were in the possession of self.

3. For the wrath of the eternal and temporal nature will soon take pleasure in it, and then self and a man's own reason will rise up in pride, and depart from the true resigned humility towards God, and will no longer eat of the fruit of paradise, but of the property of self, viz., of that dominion of life wherein good and evil are mixed, as Lucifer and Adam did. Who both entered with the desire of self back again into the original, out of which the creatures were brought forth, and into the condition of the creatures; Lucifer into the centre and wrathful nature, into the matrix or womb which bringeth forth fire; and Adam into the earthly nature, into the matrix of

the outward world, viz., into the lust after good and evil.

4. This happened to them both, because they had the light of understanding shining in self, in which they could behold themselves, whereby the spirit of self went into the imagination (viz., into a desire to get the centre), that they might exalt themselves in might, power and knowledge. Now when Lucifer sought after the mother of fire in his centre, and thought to reign therewith over the love of God, and all the angels; and when Adam also desired to try in the essence what the mother or root was from whence evil and good did spring, and purposely brought his desire thereinto in order to become knowing and full of understanding thereby; both Lucifer and Adam were captivated in their evil or false desire in the mother, and broke off themselves from resignation which proceeds from God, and so were caught by the spirit of the will, by the desire in the mother.

Which desire immediately got the dominion in nature; and so Lucifer stuck fast in the wrathful source of fire, and that fire became manifest in the spirit of his will, whereby the creature in its desire became an enemy to the love and meekness of God.

5. Adam in like manner, was immediately caught by the earthly mother, which is evil and good, created out of the love and anger of God and compacted into one substance. Whereupon the earthly property instantly got the dominion in Adam, and from thence heat and cold, envy and anger, and all malice and contrariety to God became manifest, and bore rule in him.

6. But if they had not brought the light of knowledge into self, then the glass of the knowledge of the centre and of the original of the creature, viz., of the power which it had in itself, had not been manifested, from whence the imagination and lust did arise.

7. As also we often see at this day

how the same error bringeth danger upon the enlightened children of God; in whom when the sun of the great presence of God's holiness shineth, by which the life passeth into triumph, and reason then beholdeth itself therein as in a glass, and the will goeth on in self, in its own searching, and will try what the centre is out of which the light shineth, and will of its own motion and strength force itself into it, how that from thence arise abominable pride and self-love; so that its (the creature's) own reason, which is but a mirror or glass of the eternal Wisdom, supposeth itself to be greater than it is; and then whatsoever it doth, it thinketh God's will doth in and by it, and that it is a prophet. Though it is moved only by itself, and goeth on in its own desire; in which the centre of nature presently riseth up and entereth into that false desire of self against God, and so the will entereth into self-conceit and exaltation.

8. Then the subtle devil insinuateth himself into the creature, and sifteth the centre of nature, and bringeth evil or false desires into it, so that a man becomes as it were drunken in self; and still persuades himself that he is driven by God; by which means the good beginning, wherein the divine light shone in nature, cometh to be spoiled, and so the light of God departeth from him.

9. Yet the outward light of the outward nature still remaineth shining in the creature. For its own self throweth itself thereinto, and supposeth that it is the first light of God; but it is not so. And into this self-exaltation in the light of its outward reason the devil throweth himself again (though in the first light which was divine, he was forced to depart), returning with a sevenfold desire, of which Christ spake, saying, 'When the unclean spirit departeth out of a man, he wandereth through dry places seeking rest, and findeth none; and

then he taketh to himself seven spirits worse than himself, and returneth to his first house; and finding it swept and garnished, he dwelleth therein, and so it is worse with that man than it was before.'

10. This house that is thus swept and garnished, is the light of reason in self. For if a man bringeth his desire and will into God, and goeth on in abstinence from this wicked life, and heartily desireth the love of God, then that love will manifest itself to him with its most friendly and cheerful countenance, by which the outward light also is kindled. For where the light of God is kindled, there all will be light; the devil cannot stay there, but must depart thence; and then he searcheth through the mother of the original of life, viz., the centre, but it is become a dry feeble place. For the anger of God, viz., the centre of nature, is in its own property altogether feeble, barren, and dry, and cannot get the dominion in its own wrathful principle.

Satan searcheth through these places to find an open gate to enter with his desire, and so to sift the soul that it might come to exalt itself.

11. And now if the spirit of the will of the creature throweth itself with the light of reason into the centre, viz., into self, and entereth into self-exaltation, then it goeth forth again from the light of God, and presently the devil findeth an open gate for him to enter in at, and a garnished house to dwell in, viz., the light of reason. Then he taketh to himself the seven forms of the property of life in self, viz., the flatterers which are departed from God into self: And there he entereth and putteth his desire into the lust of self and evil imaginations, wherein the spirit of the will beholdeth itself in the forms of the properties of life in the outward light, and then the man sinketh into himself as if he were drunk, and the stars lay hold on him, and bring their strong influences into him (into outward Reason), that he

might seek the wonders of God there, that so they may manifest themselves therein. For all creatures groan and long after God, and though the stars cannot apprehend the spirit of God, yet they would rather have a house of light wherein they may rejoice, than a house shut up wherein they can have no rest.

12. Thus such a man goeth on as if he were drunk, in the light of the outward reason, which is called the stars, and apprehendeth great and wonderful things, and hath a continual guide therein. And then the devil presently watcheth to see if any gate standeth open for him, through which he may kindle the centre of life, that so the spirit of the will may mount aloft in pride, self-conceit, or covetousness (from whence self-arrogancy ariseth, the will of reason desiring to be honoured); for it supposeth it hath attained the sum of all happiness, when it hath gotten the light of reason, and can judge the house of hidden

mysteries that is shut up; which nevertheless God can easily unlock. The deluded man thereupon supposeth that now he hath reached the mark, and that honour is due to him, because he hath gotten the understanding of reason, and never considereth that the devil maketh himself merry with his desire in his seven forms of life of the centre of nature, nor what abominable error he setteth up.

13. From this understanding of reason false Babel is brought forth in the Christian Church on earth, where men rule and teach by the conclusions of reason, and have set the child, which is drunk in its own pride and self-desire, as a fair virgin upon the throne.

14. But the devil is entered into its seven forms of life of the centre, viz., into its own self-conceited reason, and continually bringeth his desire into this trimmed virgin, which the stars receive. He is her beast on which she rideth, well adorned with

her own powers of life, as may be seen in the Revelation of St John. Thus hath this child of self taken into its possession the outward glance of divine holiness, viz., the light of reason, and supposeth itself to be the fair child in the house, though the devil hath his lodging within it all the while.

15. And thus it is with all those that have been once enlightened by God, and afterwards go forth again from true resignation, and wean themselves from the pure milk of their mother, viz., true humility.

CHAPTER II

HERE reason will object and say, 'Is it not right for a man to attain the light of God, and also the light of the outward nature and reason, that he may be able to order his life wisely, as the Scripture directeth?'

2. Yes, it is very right; nothing can

be more profitable to a man, neither is he capable of anything better; nay, it is a treasure above all earthly treasures for a man to have the light of God and of time, for it is the eye of time and of eternity.

3. But mark how thou oughtest to use it: When the light of God first manifesteth itself in the soul, it shineth forth as light from a candle, and kindleth the outward light of reason immediately; yet it yieldeth not itself wholly up to reason, so as to be under the dominion of the outward man. No, the outward man beholdeth himself in this through-shining lustre, as he doth his likeness in a looking-glass; whereby he presently learneth to know himself; which is good and profitable for him.

4. Now when he doth so, reason, which is the creaturely self, cannot do better than to behold itself in the self of the creature, and not enter with the will of the desire into the centre in seeking itself. If it doth,

it breaketh itself off from the substance of God (which riseth together with the light of God, of which the soul ought to eat, and refresh itself therewith), and eateth of the outward substance and light, and thereby draweth the venom into itself again.

5. The will of the creature ought to sink wholly into itself with all its reason and desire, accounting itself an unworthy child that is no whit worthy of this so high a grace; nor should it arrogate any knowledge or understanding to itself, or desire of God to have any understanding in its creaturely self; but sincerely and simply sink down into the grace and love of God in Christ Jesus, and desire to be as it were dead to itself and its own reason, in the divine life, and wholly resign itself to the spirit of God in love, that he may do how and what he will with it, as with His own instrument.

6. Its own reason ought not to enter upon any speculation in divine

or in the ground of human matters; nor to will and desire anything but the grace of God in Christ. And as a child continually longeth after the breasts of the mother, so must its hunger be continually entering into the love of God, and not suffer itself to be broken off from that hunger by any means. When the outward reason triumpheth in the light, saying, 'I have the true child,' then the will of the desire must bow itself down to the earth, and bring itself into the deepest humility and most simple ignorance, and say, 'Thou art foolish, and hast nothing but the grace of God. Thou must wrap thyself up in that belief with great humility, and become nothing at all in thyself, and neither know nor love thyself. All that thou hast, or is in thee, must esteem itself as nothing but a mere instrument of God; and thou must bring thy desire only into God's mercy, and go forth from all thy own knowing and willing; and esteem it as nothing

at all, nor ever entertain any will to enter into it again.'

7. As soon as this is done, the natural will becometh weak and faint, and then the devil is not able to sift it thus any more with his evil desire, for the places of his rest become very powerless, barren and dry; and then the Holy Spirit proceeding from God, taketh possession of the forms of life; and maketh His dominion prevail. He kindleth the forms of life with His flames of love, and then the high knowledge of the centre of all things ariseth, according to the inward and outward constellation or astral complexion of the creature, in a very subtle drying fire, attended with great delight. Whereupon the humbled soul presently desires to sink down into that light, and esteems itself to be nothing, and quite unworthy of it.

8. And thus its own desire pierceth into that nothing (viz., into that wherein God createth), and doth what God will therein, and the spirit of

God springeth forth through the desire of the resigned humility; and so the human self immediately followeth the spirit of God in trembling and humble joy; and thus it may behold what is in time and eternity, for all is present before it.

9. When the spirit of God riseth up as a fire and flame of love, then the spirit of the soul descendeth, and saith, 'Lord, Glory be to thy name, not to me; thou art able to take to thyself virtue, power, strength, wisdom, and knowledge; do as thou wilt, I can do nothing, I know nothing; I will go no whither but whither thou leadest me as thy instrument; do thou in me and with me what thou wilt.'

10. In such a humble and total resignation the spark of divine power falleth into the centre of the forms of life, as a spark into tinder, and kindleth it, viz., the fire of the soul, which Adam made to be a dark coal in himself, so that it glimmereth. And when the light of divine power hath

kindled itself therein, the creature must go on as an instrument of God's spirit, and speak what the spirit of God dictateth to it; and then it is no more in its own proper possession, but is the instrument of God.

11. But the will of the soul must without ceasing, in this fiery-driving, sink into nothing, viz., into the deepest humility in the sight of God. For no sooner doth the will of the soul in the least measure go on in its own speculation or searching, but Lucifer layeth hold of it in the centre of the forms of life, and sifteth it, so that it entereth into self. It must therefore continue close to resigned humility, as a well doth to its spring, and must suck and drink of God's fountain, and not depart from the ways of God at all.

12. For as soon as the soul eateth of self, and of the light of outward reason, it goeth on in its own opinion; and then its doings, which it sets forth for divine, are but from the out-

ward constellation, or influence of the stars, which presently layeth hold on the soul, and maketh it dry. And then the soul goeth on in errors, till it yield itself up again into resignation, and acknowledging itself anew to be a defiled child, resisteth reason, and so getteth the love of God again. Which is harder to do in that case than it was at first; for the devil bringeth in strong doubts now, and will not easily leave his fort of prey.

13. This may be seen clearly in the saints of God from the beginning of the world. For many who have been driven by the spirit of God, have yet oftentimes departed from resignation into self, viz., into their own reason and will, in which Satan hath cast them into sins, and into the anger of God; as appeareth by David and Solomon, also by the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles; who have oftentimes committed great errors when they have departed from resignation

into self, viz., into their own reason and lust.

14. Therefore, it is necessary for the children of God to know how to behave themselves when they will learn the way of God. They must beat down and cast away their very thoughts; and desire nothing, nor have the least will to learn anything, unless they find themselves to be in true resignation; so that God's spirit leadeth, teacheth, and guideth man's spirit and that the human will which is attached to itself, be wholly broken off from its own lust, and resigned to God.

15. All speculation in the wonders of God is very dangerous, for the spirit of the will may soon be captivated therewith, unless the spirit of the will goeth or walketh after the spirit of God, and then it hath power in the resigned humility to behold the wonders of God.

16. I do not say that a man should search and learn nothing in natural

arts and sciences; no; such knowledge is useful to him; but a man must not begin with his own reason. Man ought not only to govern his life by the light of outward reason, which is good in itself, but should sink with that light into the deepest humility before God, and set the spirit and will of God foremost in all his searching, so that the light of reason may see and know things through the light of God. And though reason may be very wise in its own sphere, and help a man to much knowledge, yet must it not arrogate such wisdom and knowledge to itself as if they were in its own possession, but give the glory thereof to God, to whom alone all wisdom and knowledge belong.

17. For the more deeply reason sinketh itself down into simple humility in the sight of God, and the more unworthy it accounts itself in His sight; the more truly it dieth from self-desire, and the more thoroughly the spirit of God penetrateth it, and

bringeth it into the highest knowledge, so that at length it may come to behold the great mysteries and wonders of God. For the spirit of God worketh only in resigned humility, in that which neither seeketh nor desireth itself. The spirit of God taketh hold of whatsoever desireth to be simple and lowly before Him, and bringeth it into His wonders; He hath pleasure only in those that fear and bow themselves before Him.

18. For God hath not created us for ourselves only, but to be instruments of His wonders, by which He desireth to manifest His wonders. The resigned will trusteth God, and expecteth all good from Him alone; but self-will ruleth itself, for it is broken off from God. All that self-will doth is sin, and against God; for it is gone out of that order wherein He created it, into disobedience, and desireth to be its own lord and master.

19. When a man's own will dieth from itself, then it is free from sin, for

it desireth nothing but that which God desireth of His creature; it desireth only to do that for which God hath created it; and that which God will do by it; and though it is and must be the doing, yet it is but the instrument of the doing, by which God doth what He will.

20. For this is the true faith in man, viz., to die from himself; that is, from his own desire; and in all his undertakings and designs to bring his desire into the will of God, and arrogate the doing of nothing to himself, but esteem himself in all his doings to be but a servant or minister of God, and to think that all he doth and undertaketh, is for God. For in such a disposition the spirit of God leadeth him into true uprightness and faithfulness towards his neighbour. For he thinketh thus with himself, 'I do my work not for myself, but for God, who hath called and appointed me to do it; I am but a servant in His vineyard.' He listeneth continually after

the voice of his Master, who within him commandeth him what he shall do. The Lord speaketh in him, and biddeth him do what He would have to be done by him.

21. But self doth what outward reason from the stars commandeth, into which reason the devil flieth with his desire. All whatever self doth is without the will of God, and is done altogether in the phantasy, that the anger of God may accomplish its pastime therewith.

22. No work done without the will of God can reach the kingdom of God; it is all but an unprofitable imagery, or self-wrought work, in this great agitation of mankind. For nothing is pleasing to God, but what He himself doth by the will, as his instrument. For there is but one only God in the essence of all essences, and all that which worketh with Him in that essence is one spirit with Him; but that which worketh in itself, in its own will, is in itself only and not in

His dominion. It is indeed under that universal dominion of nature, whereby He holdeth subject to Him every life, evil and good, but not under that special divine government in himself, which comprehendeth the good only. Nothing is divine which walketh and worketh not in the will of God.

23. Christ saith, 'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted out and burned in the fire.' All the works of man which he hath wrought without the will of God, shall be burnt up in the last fire and given to the wrath of God, viz., to the pit of darkness, to recreate itself withal. For Christ saith, 'He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.' Whosoever worketh, and doth it not in a resigned will with confidence in God, doth but make desolate and scatter; it is not acceptable to God. For nothing is pleasing to Him but that which He willeth with His spirit, and doth by His own instrument.

24. Therefore, whatsoever is done by the conclusions of human self, in matters of religion, is a mere fiction. It is Babel, and but a work of the stars, and of the outward world, and not acknowledged by God to be His work. It is only the play of the wrestling wheel of nature, wherein good and evil wrestle one with the other; what the one buildeth the other destroyeth. And this is the great misery of the vain turmoils of men, the issue whereof must be left to the judgment of God.

25. Whosoever therefore stirreth or laboureth much in such turmoil, worketh but for the judgment of God; for no whit of it is perfect and permanent. It must all be separated in the putrefaction. For that which is wrought in the anger of God will be received thereby, and kept in the mystery of its desire to the day of God's judgment, when evil and good shall be severed.

26. But if a man turn and go forth

from himself, and enter into the will of God, then also that good which hath been wrought in and by him, shall be freed from the evil which he hath wrought. As Isaiah saith, 'Though your sins be as red as scarlet, yet if ye turn and repent, they shall become as wool, yea, as white as snow.' For the evil shall be swallowed up in the wrath of God into death, and the good shall spring forth, as a sprout out of the wild earth.

CHAPTER III

WHOSOEVER therefore intendeth to do any good and perfect work, wherein he hopeth eternally to rejoice, let him depart from himself, viz., from his own desire and enter into resignation, into the will of God, and work with God. And then though the earthly desire of self in flesh and blood cleaveth to him, yet if the will of the soul doth not receive that desire into it, self cannot

perform any work. For the resigned will continually destroyeth the substance of self again, so that the anger of God cannot reach it. And if it should happen to reach it sometimes, as may be the case, yet the resigned will prevaileth with its superior power; and then it beareth the figure of a victorious work in the wonders, and may inherit the filiation or childship. Therefore it is not good to speak or do anything, when reason is kindled in and by the desire of self. Because that desire springeth from, and worketh in, the anger of God; by which a man would suffer loss. For his work is brought into that anger, and kept there to the great day of God's judgment.

2. Every evil or false desire, whereby a man deviseth how to gather to himself by craft much worldly gain from his neighbour to his neighbour's hurt, is taken into the anger of God, and belongeth to the judgment. Wherein all things shall be made

manifest, and every power and essence, every cause and effect, both in good and evil, shall be presented to every one in the mystery of the revelation.

3. All evil works done purposely belong to the judgment of God. But he that turneth from the will, goeth out from the power of them, and those his works belong to the fire. All things shall and must be made manifest in the end. For therefore God brought His working power into essence or substance, that His love and anger might be made manifest, and become a representation of His deeds of wonder, to His glory.

4. And every creature ought to know that it should continue in that condition wherein it was created; otherwise it runneth on in contrariety and enmity to the will of God, and bringeth itself into pain. For every intelligent creature that hath lost its place or state wherein God first created it is in disorder and misery, till it recovereth the same. A creature which

is created out of darkness hath no pain in the darkness; as a venomous serpent hath no pain from its venom. The venom is its life; but if it should lose its venom, and have some good thing instead thereof brought into it, and be made manifest in its essence, that would be pain and death to it. Thus good is torment to a being whose nature is evil, and evil, in like manner, is pain and death to the good.

5. Man was created of, for, and in paradise; of, for, and in the love of God; but if he bring himself into anger, which is as a poisonous pain and death, then that contrary paradisical life of love is a pain and torment to him.

6. If the devil had been created out of the wrathful matrix, for and in hell, and had not had the divine ens or essence, he could have no pain in hell. But he being created for and in heaven, and yet having stirred up the source or property of darkness in

himself, and thereby brought himself totally into darkness, therefore the light is now a pain to him, that is, it causeth an everlasting despair of God's grace, and a continual enmity to God, because God cannot endure him in himself, but hath cast him out. Therefore the devil is angry and wrathful against his own mother, of whose essence and substance he hath his original, viz., the eternal nature, which keepeth him prisoner in his own place, as a revolter or fallen spirit, and sporteth in him with its property of anger. And, seeing he would not bear his part in promoting the divine joy, in and for which he was created, therefore he must now do the contrary, and be an enemy to all goodness. For, of God and in Him are all things; darkness and light, love and anger, fire and light; but he calleth himself God, only as to the light of His love.

7. There is an eternal contrariety between darkness and light; neither

of them comprehendeth the other, and neither of them is the other; and yet there is only one essence, being, or substance, wherein they both subsist. But there is a difference in quality and will; yet the essence or substance is not divided, but a principle maketh the division. So that the one is a nothing in the other, and yet it is there, but not manifest in the property of that thing wherein it is.

8. For the devil continued in his own dominion or principality, not indeed in that wherein God created him, but in the aching, painful birth of eternity, in the centre of nature and property of wrath, in the property which begetteth darkness, anguish and pain. Indeed he is a prince in the place of this world, but in the first principle, in the kingdom of darkness, in the pit or abyss.

9. Not in the kingdom of the sun, stars, and elements; he is no lord or prince there, but in the wrathful part, viz., in the root of the evil of every

thing; and yet he hath not power to do what he pleaseth with that.

10. For there is some good in every thing, which holdeth the evil captive and shut up in the thing; but he can walk and rule only in the evil part or property; when it stirreth up an evil desire in itself, and bringeth its desire into wickedness. This indeed the inanimate creatures cannot do; but man can do it through the inanimate creature, if he bring the centre of his will, with the desire out of the eternal centre, into it, which is the ground of enchantment, and false magic. The will of the devil can also enter into that evil whereinto man bringeth the desire of his soul, which is born also out of the eternal nature.

11. For the original of the soul and of angels, out of the eternal nature, is the same. But the devil hath no further power over the time, or temporary condition, of this world, than in the great turba, or turba magna, the curse; wheresoever that kindleth

itself in the eternal and temporal wrath, there he is busy, as in wars, fighting, and strife, as also in great tempests without water. In the fire he proceedeth as far as the turba (mischief or hurt) goeth in great showers or tempests of thunder, lightning and hail; but he cannot direct them, for he is not lord or master in them, but servant only.

12. Thus the creature stirreth up with its desire, good and evil, life and death. The human angelical desire standeth in the centre of the eternal nature which is without beginning; and wherein it kindleth itself, whether in good or evil, it accomplisheth its work in that.

13. Now God created every thing for and in that wherein it should be, the angels for and in heaven, and man for and in paradise. If therefore the desire of the creature goeth forth from its own mother, then it entereth into the contrary will and into enmity, and it is tormented with the con-

trariety therein, and so a false will ariseth in a good; and then the good will entereth into its nothing again, viz., into the end of nature and creature, and so leaveth the creature in its own evil or wickedness, as appeareth by Lucifer and also by Adam; and had not the will of the love of God met with Adam and of mere mercy entered into the humanity or human nature again, there could be no good will in man.

14. Therefore all speculation and enquiry about God's will is a vain thing, unless the mind be converted. For when the mind standeth captivated in the self-desire of the earthly life, it cannot comprehend what the will of God is; it runneth on but in self, from one way into another, and yet findeth no rest; for self-desire evermore bringeth disquiet. But when it sinketh itself wholly into the mercy of God, desiring to die from itself, and to have God's will for a guide to the understanding, so that

it acknowledgeth and esteemeth itself as nothing, and willeth nothing but what God willeth, then shall it both know and do the will of God. And if the desire of anger in the earthly flesh should go along or join with the devil's imagination, and assault the will of the soul, yet the resigned desire crieth to God and saith, 'Abba, loving Father, deliver me from evil.' And then, though the earthly will should grow too strong in the wrath of God by the infection of the devil, the desire of anger would work but in or upon itself. According to what St Paul saith, Now if I sin, I do it not, but sin that dwelleth in my flesh; also, Now I serve the law of God in my mind, but in my flesh the law of sin. Paul meaneth not, that the will of the mind or soul should consent to the will of the flesh; but that sin is so strong in the flesh, viz., the awakened anger of God in self, that oftentimes the mind is brought into lust as it were by force, through the evil incite-

ments of the wicked, or else by beholding worldly pomp and glory; so that it absolutely beareth down the resigned will, and ruleth by force.

15. Now when sin is wrought in the flesh, then the wrath sporteth itself therewith, and catcheth at the resigned will; and then the resigned will crieth to God for deliverance from the evil, and prayeth that God would remove the guilt away from it, and bring sin into the centre, viz., into death, that it might die.

16. And St Paul saith further, Now there is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus, who are called according to the purpose of God; that is, those who in that purpose of God in which He first called man, are again called in the same calling, to stand again in that purpose of God, wherein He originally created man to be His image and likeness.

17. So long as man's own will standeth in self, so long it is not in the

purpose and calling of God; it is not called, for it is gone forth from its original right place: but when the mind turneth itself back again into the calling, viz., into resignation, then the will is in the calling of God, that is, in the place for and in which God created it, and then it hath power to become the child of God again, as it is written, He hath given us power to become the children of God.

18. The power which He hath given us is His purpose, for and in which He created man in His image. This God hath brought again into the human nature, and hath given power unto that power to break the head of sin in the flesh, namely, the will and desire of the serpent; that is, the resigned will in Christ treadeth upon the head of the desire of the sinful will of the serpent, and killeth again the sins which were committed. This power that is given becometh a death to death, and the power of life to life.

19. Therefore no man can make

any excuse, as if he could not will. Indeed, while he sticketh fast in himself, in his own desire, and serveth only the law of sin in the flesh, he cannot. For he is kept back, as being a servant of sin; but when he turneth the centre of his mind away, and directeth it into the will and obedience of God, then he can.

20. Now the centre of the mind is come out of eternity, out of God's omnipotence; it can bring itself into what it will, and whither it will. For that which is out of the eternal, hath no law. But the will hath a law to obey God, and is born out of the mind, and must not rend itself away from that out of which God created it.

21. Now God created the will of the mind for and in paradise, to be a companion with Him in the kingdom of divine joy. It ought not to have removed itself from thence; but since it hath removed itself from thence, God hath brought His will again into the flesh, and in His new-brought-in

will, hath given us power to bring our wills into it, and to kindle a new light therein, and so to become His children again.

22. God hardeneth no man; but man's own will, which goeth on in the fleshly life of sin, hardeneth his heart. The will of self bringeth the vanity of this world into the mind which is thereby shut up, and continueth so.

23. God, so far as He is called God and is God, cannot will any evil; for there is but one only will in God, and that is eternal love, a desire of that which is His like, viz., power, beauty and virtue.

24. God desireth nothing but what is like His own desire; His desire receiveth nothing but what itself is.

25. God receiveth no sinner into His power and virtue, unless the sinner go forth from his sins, and enter with the desire into God. And then, He will not cast out those that so come unto him. He hath

given to the will an open gate in Christ, saying, 'Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden with sins, and I will refresh you; take my yoke upon you,' that is, the cross of the enmity in the flesh. This was the yoke of Christ, which he had to bear for the sins of all men. This cross or yoke the resigned will must also take upon itself in the evil earthly sinful flesh, and bear it after Christ in patience and hope of deliverance. It must also continually break the head of the serpent, in and through Christ's will and spirit, and kill and destroy the earthly will in God's anger, not letting it rest on a soft bed when sin is committed, and thinking to repent one time or other.

26. No, no, the earthly will groweth strong, fat, and wanton upon this soft bed. But as soon as the light of God shineth in thee, and sheweth sin to thee, the will of thy soul must sink itself down into the passion and death of Christ, and wrap itself up close

therein. It must take the passion of Christ into its possession, and be a lord over the death of sin by the death of Christ, and kill and destroy it in the death of Christ.

27. The will of sin must die, though it be never so unwilling. Be at enmity therefore with the voluptuous earthly flesh; give it not what it would have; let it fast and suffer hunger until its tickling ceases. Account the will of the flesh thine enemy, and do not what the desire in the flesh willeth, and then thou shalt bring a death upon the deathful property in the flesh.

28. Regard not any scorn of the world, as considering that it doth but scorn thine enemy, and that is become a fool to it. Nay, do thou thyself account it thy fool, which Adam caused thee to possess, and made to be thy false heir. Cast out of the house the son of the bond-woman, that strange child which God did not give to be in the house of life in Adam at the beginning; for the son of the bond-

woman must not inherit with the son of the free-woman.

29. The earthly will is but the son of the bond-woman. For the four elements should have been man's servants, but Adam hath brought them into the sonship, or adopted them into himself. Therefore God said to Abraham, when He had opened the covenant of the promise in him; Cast out the son of the bond-woman, for he shall not inherit with the son of the free. This son of the free is Christ, which God of his grace hath brought again into the flesh for us, namely, a new or renewed mind. Wherein the will, viz., the eternal will of the soul, may draw and drink the water of life, of which Christ speaketh, saying, Whosoever shall drink of this water that I will give him, it shall spring up in him, and be a fountain of eternal life. This fountain is the renovation of the mind or will of the soul.

30. Therefore I say, that all fictions

and devices to come to God by, let them have what name soever they will, which men contrive and invent for ways to God, are but lost labour and vain endeavours, without a new mind. There is no other way to God, but a new mind, which turneth from wickedness and entereth into repentance for the sins it hath committed. Which goeth forth from its iniquity and willeth it no more; but wrappeth its will up in the death of Christ, and with all earnestness dieth from the sin of the soul in the death of Christ, so that it willeth sin no more.

31. And though all the devils should press hard upon it, and enter with their desire into the fleshly mind, yet the will of the soul must stand still and hide itself in the death of Christ, willing and desiring nothing but the mercy of God.

32. No hypocritical flattery, or outward comforting ourselves, availeth at all; as when men will cover sin and iniquity in the flesh with the satisfac-

tion of Christ, and remain in self still. Christ saith, Except ye turn and become as children, ye shall not see the kingdom of God. The mind must become as wholly new, as in a child that knoweth nothing of sin. Christ saith also, Ye must be born anew, or else ye shall not see the kingdom of God. There must arise a will wholly new, in the Death of Christ. It must be brought forth out of Christ's incarnation or entering into the humanity, and rise in Christ's resurrection.

33. Now before this can be done, the will of the soul must die in the death of Christ; for in Adam it received the son of the bond-woman, viz., sin, into it. This the will must first cast out, and the poor captive soul must wrap itself up in the death of Christ earnestly, with all the power it hath, so that the son of the bond-woman, viz., the sin that is in it, may die in the death of Christ.

34. In very deed sin must die in the will of the soul, or else there can

be no vision of God. For the earthly will, in sin and the wrathful nature, shall not see God. It is the regenerated nature only that is capable of the divine vision, or enjoyment. The soul must put on the spirit and flesh of Christ; it cannot inherit the kingdom of God in this earthly tabernacle. For the kingdom of sin hangeth to it outwardly, which must putrefy in the earth, and rise again in new power.

35. Hypocrisy, flattery, and verbal forgiveness, avail nothing. We must be children, not by outward imputation, but by being born of God from within, in the new man, which is resigned in and to God.

36. All such flattery of ourselves by saying, 'Christ hath paid the ransom, and made satisfaction for sin,' and that 'he died for our sins,' if we also do not die from sin in him, and put on his merit in new obedience, and live therein, is a false and vain comfort.

37. He that is a bitter enemy and hater of sin, can and may comfort

himself with the sufferings of Christ. He that doth not willingly see, hear, or taste sin, but is at enmity with it, and would willingly always do that which is well and right, if he knew but what he ought to do; such a one hath indeed put on the spirit and will of Christ, and is his true disciple.

38. But the outward flattery of being accounted a child of God by imputation or external application, is false and vain. The work done in, or by, the outward flesh only, doth not make the child of God, but the working of Christ in the spirit maketh, and indeed is, the child of God. Which inward working is so powerful that it shineth forth as a new light in the outward life; and proveth itself to be the child of God by its external conduct and actions.

39. For if the eye of the soul be light, then the whole body is light in all its members. Now if any boast himself to be the child of God, and yet suffereth the body to burn in sins, he

is no true child, nor capable of the inheritance; but lieth bound by the chains of the devil in gross darkness. And if he doth not find in himself an earnest and sincere desire of well-doing in love, then his pretence to the childship is but an invention of reason proceeding from self. He cannot see God, unless he be born anew, and shew forth by his power and life, that he is His true child. For there is no fire but hath light in it; and if the divine fire be in the mind, it will shine forth, and the mind will do that which God will have to be done.

40. But perhaps thou wilt say, 'I have a will indeed to do so; I would willingly do it, but I am so hindered that I cannot.'

41. Nay, thou vile man, God draweth thee to be his child, but thou wilt not; the soft cushion in evil is dearer to thee than to be so readily parted with. Thou preferrest the joy of wickedness to the joy of God. Thou art wholly swallowed up in self still, and livest

according to the law of sin, and that hindereth thee. Thou art unwilling to die from the pleasure of the flesh, and therefore thou art not in the filiation. God draweth thee to it, but thou thyself wilt not.

42. O how fine a thing would Adam think it, if he might be taken into heaven with this will of the voluptuous flesh about him, and have the child of wickedness, that is full of deceit, set upon the throne of God. Lucifer also would fain have had it so, but he was cast out.

43. It is a troublesome thing to mortify the evil will; none are willing to do it. We would all gladly be the children of God, if we might be so with this rough garment of fallen nature about us. But that cannot be. This world passeth away, and the outward life must die; what good can the adoption in the mortal body of flesh and blood only do me?

44. If we would inherit the filiation, we must also put on the new man

which can inherit it, as being like the Deity. God will have no sinners in heaven, but only such as are born anew and become children, and so have put on heaven.

45. Therefore it is not so easy a matter to become a child of God, as men imagine. Indeed it is not a troublesome thing to him that hath put on the filiation, whose light shineth; for it is joy to such a one. But to turn the mind and destroy self there is a strong and continued earnestness requisite, and such a stout and steady purpose, that if the body and soul should part asunder by it, yet the will would persevere constantly, and not enter again into self.

46. A man must wrestle till the dark centre, that is shut up close, break open, and the spark lying therein kindle; and from thence immediately the noble lily-branch sprouteth, as from the divine grain of mustard-seed, as Christ saith. A man must pray earnestly, with great humility, and for

a while become a fool in his own reason, and see himself void of understanding therein, until Christ be formed in this new incarnation.

47. And then when Christ is born, Herod is ready to kill the child, which he seeketh to do outwardly by persecutions, and inwardly by temptations, to try whether this lily-branch will be strong enough to destroy the kingdom of the devil, which is manifested in the flesh.

48. Then this destroyer of the serpent is brought into the wilderness, after he is baptized with the Holy Spirit, and tempted and tried whether or not he will continue in resignation to the will of God. In which temptation he must stand so fast, that, if need require, he would leave all earthly things, and even the outward life, to be a child of God.

49. No temporal honour must be preferred before the filiation. But he must with his will leave and forsake it all, and not account it his own, but

esteem himself as a servant only in it, who is to obey his master. He must leave all worldly propriety. We do not mean that he may not have or possess anything; but his heart must forsake it, and not bring his will into it, nor count it his own. For if he setteth his heart upon it, he hath no power to serve with it them that stand in need.

50. Self is but a slave to its temporal possessions, but resignation hath rule over all that is under it. Self must do what the devil will have it to do in fleshly voluptuousness and pride of life; but resignation treadeth it all under with the feet of the mind. Self despiseth that which is lowly and simple; but resignation sitteth down with the lowly in the dust. It saith, 'I will be simple in myself, and understand nothing, lest my understanding should exalt itself and sin. I will lie down in the courts of my God at his feet, that I may serve my Lord in that which he commandeth me. I will know nothing

of myself, that the will and power of my Lord may lead and guide me, and that I may only do what God doth through me, and will have done by me. I will sleep in myself until the Lord awaken me with his spirit; and if he will not, then will I look up to him in silence, and wait his commands.'

51. Beloved brethren, men at this time boast much of faith; but where is it to be found? The modern faith is but the history. Where is that child, which believeth that Jesus is born? If that child were in being, and did believe that Jesus is born, it would also draw near to the sweet child Jesus, and receive him and nurse him.

52. Alas! The faith of this day is but historical, a mere assent to the matter of fact that Jesus Christ lived and died, that the Jews killed him, that he left this world, and is not King on earth in the outward man; but that men may do what they list, and

need not die from sin, and their evil lusts. All this the wicked child, self, rejoiceth in, that it may fatten the devil by living deliciously.

53. This sheweth plainly that true faith was never weaker since Christ's time, than it is now. When nevertheless the world crieth aloud, and saith, 'We have got the true faith'; and contend about a child, with a contention than which there was never worse since men were on earth.

54. If thou art truly Zion, and hast that new-born child which was lost and is found again, then let it be seen in power and virtue. Let us all openly see the sweet child Jesus brought forth by thee, and that thou art his nurse. If not, then the children in Christ will say, thou hast found nothing but the cradle of the child, that is, the history.

55. Where hast thou the sweet child Jesus, thou that art so exalted with the history, and with thy false and seeming faith? O how will the child

Jesus visit thee one day in the Father's property, the property of anger, in thy own turba which thou hast fatted! It calleth thee now in love, but thou wilt not hear, for thine ears are stopped with covetousness and voluptuousness. Therefore, the sound of the trumpet shall one day alarm thee with the hard thunderclap of thy turba, and rouse thee up, if haply thou wilt then seek and find the sweet child Jesus.

56. Beloved Brethren, this is a time of seeking, of seeking and of finding. It is a time of earnestness; whom it toucheth, it toucheth home. He that watcheth shall hear and see it; but he that sleepeth in sin, and saith in the fat days of his belly, 'All is peace and quiet; we hear no sound from the Lord,' shall be blind. But the voice of the Lord hath sounded in all the ends of the earth, and a smoke riseth, and in the midst of the smoke there is a great brightness and splendour. Hallelujah. Amen.

Shout unto the Lord in Zion, for all mountains and hills are full of his glory: He flourisheth like a green branch, and who shall hinder it? Hallelujah.

THE THIRD BOOK.

OF

REGENERATION,

OR THE

NEW BIRTH,

SHEWING

How he that earnestly seeketh Salvation, must suffer himself to be brought out of the confused and contentious Babel, by the Spirit of Christ, that he may be born anew in the Spirit of Christ, and live to Him only.

Written in the German Language,

(Anno 1622)

By JACOB BOEHME.

COME out of Babylon, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.—**Rev. xviii. 4, 5.**

The Author's Preface to the Reader

THOUGH I have in my other writings set down a clear description of Regeneration, or the New Birth, from the ground thereof; yet because every one hath them not, neither hath every one the capacity to understand them; I have therefore, as a service to the simple children of Christ, here set down a short sum concerning the New Birth.

But if any desire to search the deep ground from whence all floweth, and have the gift to understand it, let them read these books following.

1. *The Three Principles of the Divine Essence.*

2. *The Three-fold Life of Man.*

3. *The Forty Questions of the Original Essence, Substance, Nature, and Property of the Soul.*

4. *The Incarnation and Birth of Jesus Christ the Son of God; also of his Suffering, Death, and Resurrection.*

5. *The Six Points* treating of the *Three Worlds* how they are *in* one another as *one;* and yet make *Three Principles, viz., Three Births or Centres.*

6. *The Mysterium Magnum,* which is an *Interpretation* upon *Genesis.*

And in them he shall find all that he can ask, and that as deep as the mind of man is able to reach. I have written this for the true Israelites, that is, for the hungry and thirsty hearts that long after the fountain of Christ, who are my fellow-members in the spirit of Christ: But not for the Ishmaelites and scorners, for they have a book within them, wherewith they vex, persecute, and suppress the children

of Christ that are under the cross; and yet, though it be unwillingly and unwittingly to themselves, they must be servants to such children of Christ.

OF REGENERATION

CHAPTER I

Shewing how man should consider himself.

CHRIST said, 'Except ye turn and become as children, ye shall not see the kingdom of God.' Again, he said to Nicodemus; 'Except a man be born again, of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God; for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.'

2. Also the Scripture positively declareth, that 'the fleshly natural man receiveth not the things of the

spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know or conceive them.'

3. Now seeing that all of us have flesh and blood and are mortal, as we find by experience, and yet the Scripture saith, that 'We are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us,' and that 'the kingdom of God is within us,' and that 'Christ must be formed in us;' also that 'He will give us his flesh for food, and his blood for drink:' And that, 'Whosoever shall not eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, hath no life in him.' Therefore we should seriously consider what kind of man in us it is, that is capable of being thus like the Deity.

4. For it cannot be said of the mortal flesh that turneth to earth again, and liveth in the vanity of this world, and continually lusteth against God, that it is the temple of the Holy Ghost; much less can it be said that the new birth cometh to pass in this earthly

flesh, which dieth and putrifieth, and is a continual house of sin.

5. Yet seeing that it remaineth certain, that a true Christian is born of Christ, and that the new birth is the temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us, and that the new man only, that is born of Christ, partaketh of the flesh and blood of Christ; it appeareth that it is not so easy a matter to be a Christian.

6. And that Christianity doth not consist in the mere knowing of the history, and applying the knowledge thereof to ourselves, saying that 'Christ died for us, and hath destroyed death and turned it into life in us, and that He hath paid the ransom for us, so that we need do nothing but comfort ourselves therewith, and stedfastly believe that it is so.'

7. For we find of ourselves that sin is living, lusting, strong, and powerfully working in the flesh, and therefore it must be somewhat else, which doth not co-operate with sin in the

flesh, nor willeth it, that is the new birth in Christ.

8. For St Paul saith, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' And further, 'Should we that are Christians be yet sinners? God forbid, seeing we are dead to sin in Christ.'

9. Besides, the man of sin cannot be the 'temple of the Holy Ghost;' and yet 'there is no man that sinneth not, for God hath shut up all under sin.' As the Scripture saith, 'No one living is righteous in thy sight, if thou imputest his sins to him. The righteous man falleth seven times a day;' and yet it cannot be meant that the righteous falleth and sinneth, but his mortal and sinful man. For the righteousness of a Christian in Christ cannot sin.

10. Moreover, St Paul saith, 'Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we expect our Saviour Jesus Christ.' Now, if our conversation be in heaven, then heaven must be in us; Christ dwelleth in heaven, and

then if we are his temple, that temple heaven must be in us.

11. But for all this, seeing sin tempteth us within us, whereby the devil hath within us an access to us, therefore hell also must be in us too, for the devil dwelleth in hell; wheresoever he is, he is in hell, and cannot come out of it. Yea, when he possesseth a man, he dwelleth in hell, viz., in the anger of God in that man.

12. Therefore we ought to consider well what man is, and how he is a man; and then we shall find that a true Christian is not a mere historical new man, as if it were enough for us outwardly to confess Christ, and believe that he is the Son of God, and hath paid the ransom for us. For righteousness availeth nothing, imputed from without, that is, by believing only that it is so imputed. But it is an inherent righteousness born in us, by which we become the children of God, that availeth.

13. And as the earthly flesh must die, so also the life and will must die from sin, and be as a child that knoweth nothing, but longeth only after the mother which brought it forth. So likewise must the will of a Christian enter again into its mother, viz., into the spirit of Christ, and become a child in itself, in its own will and power, having its will and desire inclined and directed only towards its mother. And a new will and obedience in righteousness, which willeth sin no more, must rise from death out of the spirit of Christ in him.

14. For that will is not born anew, which desireth and admitteth vanity into itself; and yet there remaineth a will which longeth after vanity, and sinneth, even in the new born or regenerate man. Therefore the image or nature of man should be well understood, and how the new birth cometh to pass; seeing it is not wrought in the mortal flesh, and yet is wrought truly and really in us, in flesh and

blood, in water and spirit, as the Scripture saith.

15. We should therefore rightly understand what kind of man it is in us, that is the member of Christ, and temple of God who dwelleth in heaven. And then also what kind of man it is, that the devil ruleth and driveth; for he cannot meddle with the temple of Christ, nor doth he care much for the mortal flesh; and yet there are not three men in one another, for all make but one man.

16. Now if we will understand this rightly, we must consider time and eternity, and how they are in one another; also light and darkness, good and evil; but especially the original of man, which may be thus apprehended.

17. The outward world with the stars and four elements, wherein man and all creatures live, neither is, nor is called God. Indeed God dwelleth in it, but the substance of the outward world comprehendeth Him not.

18. We see also that the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth not the light, and yet they both dwell in one another. The four elements are also an example of this; which in their original are but one element, which is neither hot nor cold, nor dry, nor moist, and yet by its stirring separateth itself into four properties, viz., into fire, air, water, and earth.

19. Who would believe that fire produceth or generateth water? And that the original of fire could be in water, if we did not see it with our eyes in tempests of thunder, lightning, and rain; and did not find also, that in living creatures, the essential fire of the body dwelleth in the blood, and that the blood is the mother of the fire, and the fire is the father of the blood.

20. And as God dwelleth in the world, and filleth all things, and yet possesseth nothing; and as the fire dwelleth in water, and yet possesseth

it not; Also, as the light dwelleth in darkness, and yet possesseth not the darkness; as the day is in the night, and the night in the day, time in eternity, and eternity in time; so is man created according to the outward humanity, he is the time, and in the time, and the time is the outward world, and it is also the outward man.

21. The inward man is eternity and the spiritual time and world, which also consisteth of light and darkness, viz., of the love of God, as to the eternal light, and of the anger of God as to the eternal darkness; whichsoever of these is manifest in him, his spirit dwelleth in that, be it darkness or light.

22. For light and darkness are both in him, but each of them dwelleth in itself, and neither of them possesseth the other; but if one of them entereth into the other, and will possess it, then that other loseth its right and power.

23. The passive loseth its power; for if the light be made manifest in

the darkness, then the darkness loseth its darkness, and is not known or discerned. Also, on the contrary, if the darkness arise in the light and get the upper hand, then the light and the power thereof are extinguished. This is to be observed also in man.

24. The eternal darkness of the soul is hell, viz., an aching source of anguish, which is called the anger of God; but the eternal light in the soul is the kingdom of heaven, where the fiery anguish of darkness is changed into joy.

25. For the same nature of anguish, which in the darkness is a cause of sadness, is in the light a cause of the outward and stirring joy. For the source or original in light, and the source in darkness are but one eternal source, and one nature, and yet they, viz., the light and darkness, have a mighty difference in the source; the one dwelleth in the other and begetteth the other, and yet is not the other. The fire is painful and

consuming, but the light is yielding, friendly, powerful, and delightful, a sweet and amiable joy.

26. This may be found also in man; he is and liveth in three worlds; the First is the eternal dark world, viz., the centre of the eternal nature which produceth or generateth the fire, viz., the source or property of anguish.

27. The Second is the eternal light world, which begetteth the eternal joy, which is the divine habitation wherein the spirit of God dwelleth, and wherein the spirit of Christ receiveth the human substance, and subdueth the darkness, so that it must be a cause of joy in the spirit of Christ in the light.

28. The Third is the outward visible world in the four elements and the visible stars; though indeed every element hath its peculiar constellation in itself, whence the desire and property arise, and is like a mind.

29. Thus you may understand, that

the fire in the light is a fire of love, a desire of meekness and delightfulness; but the fire in the darkness is a fire of anguish and is painful, irksome, inimical and full of contrariety in its essence. The fire of the light hath a good relish or taste, but the taste in the essence of darkness is unpleasant, loathsome and irksome. For all the forms or properties in the eternal nature, till they reach to fire, are in great anguish.

CHAPTER II

How man is created.

HERE we are to consider the creation of man. Moses saith, 'God created man in His image, in the image of God created He him.' This we understand to be both out of the eternal and temporal birth; out of the inward and spiritual world which he breathed into him, into the created image; and

then out of the substance of the inward spiritual world, which is holy.

31. For as there is a nature and substance in the outward world; so also in the inward spiritual world there is a nature and substance which is spiritual; from which the outward world is breathed forth, and produced out of light and darkness, and created to have a beginning and time.

32. And out of the substance of the inward and outward world man was created; out of and in the likeness of the birth of all substances. The body is a limbus (an extract or a kind of seed, which containeth all that which the thing from whence it is taken hath) of the earth, and also a limbus of the heavenly substance; for the earth is breathed forth, outspoken, or created out of the dark and light world. In the Word Fiat (or creating Word) viz., in the eternal desire, man was taken out of the earth, and so created an image out of time and eternity.

33. This image was in the inward

and spiritual element, from whence the four elements proceed and are produced. In that one element was paradise; for the properties of nature from the fire-dark-and-light-world were all in harmony and agreement in number, weight, and measure. One of them was not manifested more eminently than another, therefore was there no frailty therein. For no one property was predominant over another, neither was there any strife or contrariety among the powers and properties.

34. Into this created image God breathed the spirit and breath of understanding out of the three worlds, as one only soul, which, as to its original principle or essence, is, or consisteth in, the inward dark fire-world of the eternal spiritual nature; according to which God calleth himself a strong, jealous God, and a consuming fire.

35. And this now is the eternal creaturely great soul, a magical breath of fire, in which fire consisteth the

original of life, from the great power of variation. God's anger, or the eternal darkness, is in this property, so far as fire reacheth without giving light.

36. The second property of the breath of God is the spirit of the source of light, proceeding from the great fiery desire of love, from the great meekness; according to which God calleth himself a loving, merciful God; in which consisteth the true spirit of understanding, and of life in power.

37. For as light shineth from power, and as the power of understanding is discerned in the light, so the breath of the light was joined to the breath of the fire of God, and breathed into the image of man.

38. The third property of the breath of God was the outward air with its constellation or astrum, wherein the life and constellation of the outward substance and body did consist. This he breathed into his nostrils; and as time and eternity hang together, and

as time is produced out of eternity, so the inward breath of God hung to the outward.

39. This three-fold soul was at once breathed into man; and each substance of the body received the spirit according to its property. The outward flesh received the outward air and its constellations, for a rational and vegetative life, to the manifestation of the wonders of God; and the light-body or heavenly substance received the breath of the light of the great divine powers and virtues; which breath is called the Holy Ghost.

40. Thus the light pierced through the darkness, viz., through the dark breath of fire, and also through the breath of the outward air and its constellation or astrum, and so deprived all the properties of their power, that neither the anguish of the breath of fire in the inward property of the soul, nor heat nor cold, nor any of all the properties of the outward constellation, might or could be manifested.

41. The properties of all the three worlds in soul and body were in equal agreement, temperature, and weight. That which was inward and holy ruled through and over the outward, that is, the outward parts of the outward life, of the outward stars or constellations and the four elements; and that original and universal power of the inward over the outward constituted the holy paradise.

42. And thus man was both in heaven and also in the outward world, and was lord over all the creatures of this world. Nothing could destroy him.

43. For such was the earth also, until the curse of God broke forth. The holy property of the spiritual world sprang up through the earth, and brought forth holy paradisical fruits, which man could then eat in a magical paradisical manner.

44. And had neither need of teeth, nor entrails in his body. For as the light swalloweth up darkness, and as

the fire devoureth water, and yet is not filled therewith, just such a centre man also had for his mouth to eat withal, according to the manner of eternity.

45. And he could also generate his like out of himself, without any dividing or opening of his body and spirit, in such a manner as God generated the outward world; who did not divide himself; but did in his desire, viz., in the Word Fiat, manifest himself, and brought that same desire into a figure according to the eternal spiritual birth. So also man was created an image and likeness of God in that respect, according to time and eternity, out of both time and eternity, yet in and for an immortal life which was without enmity or contrariety.

46. But the devil having himself been a prince and hierarch in the place of this world, and cast out for his pride into the dark, anguishing, painful and hostile property and source, into the wrath of God, envied man the glory of being created in and for the spiritual

world, the place which he himself once possessed; and therefore brought his imagination or desire into the image of man, and made it so lusting, that the dark world, and also the outward world arose in man, and departed from the equal agreement and temperature wherein they stood, and so one predominated over the other.

47. And then the properties were each of them separately made manifest in itself, and each of them lusted after that which was like itself. That which was out of the birth of the dark world, and also that which was out of the birth of the light world, would each of them eat of the limbus of the earth, according to its hunger; and so evil and good became manifest in Adam.

48. And when the hunger of the properties went into the earth, from whence the properties of the body were extracted, then the Fiat drew such a branch out of the earth, as the properties could eat of in their awakened vanity; for this was possible.

49. For the spirit of the strong and great magical power of time and eternity was in Adam, from which the earth with its properties was breathed forth; and so the Fiat, viz., the strong desire of the eternal nature, attracted the essence of the earth. And thus God let the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil grow for Adam, according to his awakened properties; for the great power of the soul and of the body caused it.

50. And then man must be tried, whether he would stand and subsist in his own powers, before the tempter, the devil, and before the wrath of the eternal nature; and whether the soul would continue in the equal agreement of the properties in true resignation under God's spirit, as an instrument of God's harmony, a tuned instrument of divine joyfulness for the spirit of God to strike upon. This was tried by that tree, and this severe commandment was added, 'Thou shalt not eat thereof, for on that day that

thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'

51. But it being known to God that man would not stand, and that he had already imagined and lusted after good and evil, God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone, we will make him an helpmeet for him.'

52. For God saw that Adam could not then generate magically, having entered with his lust into vanity. Now therefore Moses saith, 'God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, and he slept;' that is, seeing man would not continue in the obedience of the divine harmony in the properties, submitting himself to stand still as an instrument of the spirit of God; therefore God suffered him to fall from the divine harmony into a harmony of his own, viz., into the awakened properties of evil and good; the spirit of his soul went into these.

53. And there in this sleep he died from the angelical world, and fell under the power of the outward Fiat, and

thus bade farewell to the eternal image which was of God's begetting. Here his angelical form and power fell into a swoon and lay on the ground.

54. And then by the Fiat God made the woman out of him, out of the matrix of Venus, viz., out of that property wherein Adam had the begettress in himself; and so out of one body he made two, and divided the properties of the tinctures, viz., the watery and fiery constellations in the element; yet not wholly in substance but in the spirit, viz., the properties of the watery and fiery soul.

55. And yet it is but one thing still, only the property of the tincture was divided; the desire of self-love was taken out of Adam, and formed into a woman according to his likeness. And thence it is that man now so eagerly desireth the matrix of the woman, and the woman desireth the limbus of the man, viz., the fire-element, the original of the true soul, by which is meant the tincture of fire; for these two were one

in Adam, and therein consisted the magical begetting.

56. And as soon as Eve was made out of Adam in his sleep, both Adam and Eve were at that instant set and constituted in the outward natural life, having the members given them for propagation, after the manner of the brute animals, and also the fleshly carcase, into which they might put their gross earthliness, and live like beasts.

57. Of which the poor soul that is captivated in vanity is at this day ashamed; and sorry that its body hath gotten such a bestial monstrous shape. Nothing can be clearer than this. For it is because mankind are ashamed of their members and nakedness, that they borrow their clothing from the earthly creatures. For this they would not have done, had they not lost the angelical form, and assumed that of a beast.

58. This borrowed clothing, together with the awakened earthliness, and

subjection to the powers of heat and cold, is a plain and full proof to man, that he is not truly at home in this world. For all earthly appetites, cares, and fears, together with this false clothing, must perish and be severed from the soul again.

59. Now when Adam awoke from sleep, he beheld his wife, and knew that she came out of him; for he had not yet eaten of vanity with his outward mouth, but with the imagination, desire, and lust only.

60. And it was the first desire of Eve, that she might eat of the tree of vanity, of evil and good, to which the devil in the form of a serpent persuaded her, saying, 'That her eyes should be opened, and she should be as God himself;' which was both a lie and a truth.

61. But he told her not, that she should lose the divine light and power thereby; he only said, 'her eyes should be opened, that she might taste, prove, and know evil and good,

as he had done.' Neither did he tell her that heat and cold would awake in her, and that the property of the outward constellations would have great power over the flesh and over the mind.

62. His only aim was that the angelical image, viz., the substance which came from the inward spiritual world, might disappear in them. For then they would be constrained to live in subjection to the gross earthliness, and the constellations or stars; and then he knew well enough that when the outward world perished, the soul would be with him in darkness. For he saw that the body must die, when he perceived by that which God had intimated; and so he expected still to be lord to all eternity in the place of this world, in his false shape which he had gotten; and therefore he seduced man.

63. For when Adam and Eve were eating the fruit, evil, and good, into the body, then the imagination of the

body received vanity in the fruit, and then vanity awaked in the flesh, and the dark world got the upper hand and dominion in the vanity of the earthliness; upon which the fair image of heaven, that proceeded out of the heavenly divine world, instantly disappeared.

64. Here Adam and Eve died to the kingdom of heaven, and awaked to the outward world, and then the fair soul, as it stood in the love of God, disappeared as to the holy power, virtue, and property; and instead thereof, the wrathful anger, viz., the dark fire-world, awoke in it, and so the soul became in one part, viz., in the inward nature, a half devil, and in the outward part as related to the outward world, a beast.

65. Here are the bounds of death and the gates of hell, for which cause God became man, that he might destroy death, defeat the devil's purpose, and change hell into great love again.

66. Let this be told you, Ye children of men; it is told you in the sound of a trumpet, that you should instantly go forth from the abominable vanity, for the fire thereof burneth.

CHAPTER III

Of the lamentable fall of man, and of the means of his deliverance.

NOW when Adam and Eve fell into this vanity, then the wrath of nature awoke in each property, and in or through the desire impressed the vanity of the earthliness and wrath of God into itself.

68. And then the flesh became gross and rough, as the flesh of a beast, and the soul was captivated in the essence therewith, and saw that its body was become a beast, and had gotten the bestial members for multiplication, and the filthy carcase into which the desire would stuff the loathsomeness

which it was ashamed of in the presence of God; and therefore Adam and Eve hid themselves under the trees of the Garden of Eden. Heat and cold also seized on them.

69. And here the heaven in man trembled for horror; as the earth quaked in wrath, when this anger was destroyed on the cross by the sweet love of God; there the anger trembled before the sweet love of God.

70. And for this vanity's sake which was thus awakened in man, God cursed the earth; lest the holy element should spring or shine forth any more through the outward fruit, and bring forth paradisical fruit. For there was then no creature that could have enjoyed it; neither was the earthly man worthy of it any more.

71. God would not cast the precious pearls before beasts; an ungodly man in his body being but a mere gross bestial creature; and though it be of a noble essence, yet it is wholly poisoned and loathsome in the sight of God.

72. Now when God saw that his fair image was spoiled, he manifested himself to fallen Adam and Eve and had pity on them, and promised himself to them for an everlasting possession, and that with his great love in the received humanity he would destroy the power of the serpentine property, viz., of the vanity in the wrath of God awakened in them. And this was the breaking of the head of the serpent which he would perform, viz., he would destroy the dark death, and subdue the anger with his great love.

73. And this covenant of his incarnation which was to come, he put into the light of life; to which covenant the Jewish sacrifices pointed as to a mark or limit, to which God had promised himself with his love; for the faith of the Jews entered into the sacrifices and offerings, and God's imagination entered into the covenant.

74. And the offering was a figure of the restitution of that which Adam had lost, and so God did expiate his

anger in the human property, through the offering in the limit of the covenant.

75. In which covenant the most holy sweet name Jesus, proceeding out of the holy name and great power Jehovah, had incorporated itself; so that he would again move and manifest himself in the substance of the heavenly world which disappeared in Adam, and kindle the holy divine life therein again.

76. This mark or limit of the covenant was propagated from Adam and his children, from man to man, and did go through from one upon all; as sin also and the awakened vanity did go through from one upon all.

77. And it stood in the promise of the covenant at the end, in the root of David in the Virgin Mary, who was, in the inward kingdom of the hidden humanity, (viz., of the essentiality that disappeared as to the kingdom of God) the daughter of God's covenant, but in the outward according to the natural humanity, she was begotten by her

true bodily father Joachim and her true mother Anna, out of the essences and substance of their souls and bodies, like all other children of Adam; a true daughter of Eve.

78. In this Mary from the Virgin (viz., the Wisdom of God) in the promised limit of the covenant, of which all the prophets have prophesied, the Eternal Speaking Word, which created all things, did in the fulness of time move itself in the name Jesus, according to its highest and deepest love and humility, and did bring again living, divine, and heavenly substantiality into the humanity of the heavenly part (which disappeared) in Adam, and from which he died in paradise, into the seed of Mary, into the tincture of love, into that property wherein Adam should have propagated himself in a magical and heavenly manner, into the true seed of the woman, of heavenly substantiality, which disappeared in paradise.

79. And when the divine light in the

heavenly essence was extinguished, the Word of God, viz., the divine power of the understanding, did bring in heavenly and living substantiality, and awakened the disappeared substantiality in the seed of Mary, and brought it to life.

80. And so now God's substance, wherein He dwelleth and worketh, and the disappeared substance of man, are become one person; for the holy divine substantiality did anoint the disappeared; therefore that Person is called Christus, the Anointed of God.

81. And this is the dry rod of Aaron, which blossomed and bare almonds, and the true high priest; and it is that humanity of which Christ spake, saying that, 'He was come from heaven and was in heaven,' and that 'no man could ascend into heaven but the Son of Man which is come from heaven, and is in heaven.'

82. Now when he saith, 'He is come from heaven,' it is meant of the heavenly

substance, the heavenly corporeality; for the power and virtue of God needeth no coming any whither, for it is everywhere altogether immeasurable and undivided. But substance needeth coming; the power or virtue needeth to move itself, and manifest itself in substance.

83. And that substance entered into the human substance, and received it; not that part only of heavenly substantiality, which disappeared in Adam, but the whole human essence in soul and flesh, according to all the three worlds.

84. But He hath not received, or taken upon Himself, the awakened or impressed vanity, which the devil, by his imagination, brought into the flesh, by which the flesh did commit sin. Though He hath indeed taken upon Him the awakened forms of life, as they were gone forth from their equal agreement, each of them into its own desire.

85. For therein lay our infirmity,

and the death, which He was to drown with his heavenly holy blood. Herein He took upon himself all our sins and infirmities, also death and hell in the wrath of God, and destroyed their power in the human properties.

86. The wrath of God was the hell into which the spirit of Christ went, when He had shed that heavenly blood into our outward human blood, and tinctured it with the love; thereby changing that hell of the human property into heaven, and reducing the human properties into equal agreement, into the heavenly harmony.

CHAPTER IV

How we are born anew, and how we may fall into God's anger again.

NOW here we may rightly understand what our new birth, or regeneration, is; and how we may become, and continue to be, the temple of God; though in this lifetime,

according to the outward humanity, we are sinful mortal men.

88. Christ in the human essence hath broken up and opened the gates of our inward heavenly humanity, which was shut up in Adam. So that nothing is now wanting, but that the soul draw its will out from the vanity of the corrupted flesh, and bring it into this open gate in the spirit of Christ.

89. Great and strong earnestness is required here; and not only a learning and knowing, but a real hunger and thirst after the spirit of Christ. For to know only, is not faith; but a hunger and thirst after that which I want, so that I draw it in thereby to myself, and lay hold on it with the desire and imagination, and, make it my own; this is the truth and essence of a Christian's faith.

90. The will must go forth from the vanity of the flesh, and willingly yield itself up to the suffering and death of Christ, and to all the reproach of

vanity,—which derideth it because it goeth forth from its own house wherein it was born, and regardeth vanity no more, but merely desireth the love of God in Christ Jesus.

91. In such a hunger and desire the will receiveth and impresseth into itself the spirit of Christ with his heavenly corporeality; that is, the soul in its great hunger and desire taketh hold of, and draweth the body of Christ, viz., the heavenly substantiality, into its disappeared image, within which the word of the power of God is the working.

92. The hunger of the soul bringeth its desire quite through the bruised property of its humanity in the heavenly part, which disappeared in Adam; which humanity the sweet fire of love in the death of Christ did bruise, when the death of that heavenly humanity was destroyed.

93. And so the hunger of the soul received into it, into its disappeared corporeality, through the desire, the

holy heavenly substance, viz., Christ's heavenly corporeality, which filleth the Father all over, and is nigh unto all, and through all things; and through that the disappeared heavenly body riseth in the power of God, in the sweet name Jesus.

94. And this raised heavenly spiritual body is the member of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost, a true mansion of the Holy Trinity according to Christ's promise, saying, 'We will come to you, and make our abode in you.'

95. The essence of that life eateth the flesh of Christ, and drinketh his blood. For the spirit of Christ, viz., the word, which made itself visible with the humanity of Christ out of and in our disappeared humanity, through the outward man of the substance of this world, swalloweth its holy substance into its fiery; for every spirit eateth of its own body.

96. Now if the soul eat of this sweet, holy, and heavenly food, then it

kindleth itself with the great love in the name and power of Jesus ; whence its fire of anguish becometh a great triumph of joy and glory, and the true sun ariseth to it, wherein it is born to another will.

97. And here cometh to pass the wedding of the Lamb, which we heartily wish that the titular and Lip-Christians might once find by experience in themselves, and so pass from the history into the substance.

98. But the soul obtaineth not this Pearl of the Divine Wisdom and virtue for its own property during the time of this life; because it hath the outward bestial flesh sticking to its outward man.

99. The power of which Pearl of Divine Wisdom espouseth itself in this wedding of the Lamb, and sinketh itself down into the heavenly image, viz., into the substance of the heavenly man, who is the temple of Christ ; but not into the fire-breath of the soul, which is yet, during this whole lifetime,

fast bound to the outward kingdom, to the bond of vanity, with the breath of the air, and is in great danger.

100. It darteth its beams of love indeed very often into the soul, whereby the soul receiveth light; but the spirit of Christ yieldeth not itself up to the fire-breath in this life's time, but to the breath of light only which was extinguished in Adam, in which the temple of Christ is, for that is the true and holy heaven.

101. Understand aright now what the new birth or regeneration is, and how it cometh to pass, as followeth. The outward earthly mortal man is not born anew in this life's time, that is, neither the outward flesh, nor the outward part of the soul. They continue both of them in the vanity of their wills which awoke in Adam. They love their mother, in whose body they live, viz., the dominion of this outward world; and therein the birth of sin is manifest.

102. The outward man in soul and

flesh (we mean the outward part of the soul) hath no divine will, neither doth he understand anything of God, as the Scripture saith, 'The natural man perceiveth not the things of the spirit of God,' etc.

103. But the fire-breath of the inward world, if it be once enlightened, understandeth it; it hath a great longing, sighing, hunger, and thirst after the sweet fountain of Christ; it refresheth itself by hungering and desiring (which is the true faith in) the sweet fountain of Christ from his new body, from the heavenly substantiality, as a hungry branch in the vine Christ.

104. And the reason why the fiery soul cannot attain to perfection during this lifetime, is because it is fast bound with the outward bond of vanity, through which the devil continually casteth his venomous rays of influence upon it, and so sifteth it that it often biteth at his bait, and poisoneth itself. From whence misery and anguish arise, so that the noble Sophia hideth

herself in the fountain of Christ, in the heavenly humanity; for she cannot draw near to vanity.

105. For she knew how it went with her in Adam, when she lost her Pearl, which is of grace freely bestowed again upon the inward humanity; therefore she is called Sophia, viz., the Bride of Christ.

106. Here she faithfully calleth to her bridegroom, the fiery soul, and exhorteth him to repentance, and to the unburdening of himself, or going forth from the abomination of vanity.

107. And now war assaulteth the whole man. The outward fleshly man fighteth against the inward spiritual man, and the spiritual against the fleshly; and so man is in continual warfare and strife, full of trouble, misery, anguish, and care.

108. The inward spirit saith to the fiery soul: O my soul! O my love! Turn I beseech thee and go forth from vanity, or else thou loseth my love and the noble Pearl.

109. Then saith the outward reason, viz., the bestial soul; 'Thou art foolish; wilt thou be a laughing-stock, and the scorn of the world? Thou needest the outward world to maintain this life. Beauty, power, and glory are thy proper happiness; wherein only thou canst rejoice and take delight. Why wilt thou cast thyself into anguish, misery, and reproach? Take thy pleasure, which will do both thy flesh and thy mind good.'

110. With such filth the true man is often defiled; that is, the outward man defileth himself, as a sow in the mire, and obscureth his noble Pearl. For the more vain the outward man groweth, the more dark the inward man cometh to be, until at length it disappeareth altogether.

111. And then the fair paradisical tree is gone, and it will be very hard to recover it again. For when the outward light, viz., the outward soul is once enlightened, so that the outward light of reason is kindled by the

inward light; then the outward soul commonly useth to turn hypocrite, and esteem itself divine, even though the Pearl be gone; which lamentable error sticketh hard to many a man.

112. And thus it comes to pass that the Tree of Pearl in the garden of Christ is often spoiled; concerning which the Scripture maketh a hard knot or conclusion, viz., That those who have once tasted the sweetness of the world to come, and fall away from it again, shall hardly see the kingdom of God.

113. And though it cannot be denied, but that the gates of grace still stand open, yet the false and dazzling light of the outward reason of the soul so deceiveth and hindereth such men, that they suppose they have the Pearl, while they yet live to the vanity of this world, and dance with the devil after his pipe.

CHAPTER V

How a man may call himself a Christian, and how not.

HERE therefore a Christian should consider why he calleth himself a Christian, and examine truly whether he be one or not. For surely my learning to know and confess that I am a sinner, and that Christ hath destroyed my sins on the cross, and shed His blood for me, doth not make me a Christian.

115. The inheritance belongeth only to the children. A maid-servant in a house knoweth well enough what the mistress would have to be done, and yet that maketh her not the heiress of her mistress's goods. The very devils know that there is a God, yet that doth not change them into angels again. But if the maid-servant in the house shall be married to the son of her mistress, then she may come to inherit her mistress's goods. And so

it is to be understood also in the matter of being a Christian.

116. The children of the history are not the heirs of the goods of Christ, but the legitimate children, regenerated by the spirit of Christ are the only true heirs. For God said to Abraham, Cast out the son of the bondwoman, he shall not inherit with the son of the free. For he was a scorner, and but an historical son of the faith and spirit of Abraham; and so long as he continued such a one, he was not a true inheritor of the faith of Abraham, and therefore God commanded he should be cast out from inheriting his goods; which was a type of the Christendom which was to come.

117. For the promise of Christendom was made to Abraham; therefore the type was then also set forth by two brethren, Isaac and Ishmael, in order to shew how Christendom would behave itself, and that two sorts of men would be in it, viz., true Chris-

tians and Lip-Christians. Which latter under the title of Christianity would be but mockers, as Ishmael was and Esau, who also was a type of the outward Adam, as Jacob was a type of Christ, and His true Christendom.

118. Thus every one who will call himself a Christian, must cast out from himself the son of the bondwoman, that is, the earthly will, and be evermore killing and destroying it, and not settle it in the inheritance.

119. Nor give the Pearl to the bestial man, for him to sport himself with in the outward light, in the lust of the flesh; but we must, with our father Abraham, bring the son of the right will to Mount Moriah, and be ready in obedience to God to offer it up, ever in will dying from sin in the death of Christ, giving no place to the beast of vanity in the kingdom of Christ, nor suffering it to grow wanton, proud, covetous, envious, and malicious. For all these are the

properties of Ishmael the son of the bondwoman, whom Adam begat in his vanity on the wanton whore, the false bondwoman, by the devil's imagination, out of the earthly property in flesh and blood.

120. This mocker and titular Christian is the son of the false bondwoman, and must be cast out; for he shall not possess the inheritance of Christ in the kingdom of God. He is not fit, he is but Babel, a confusion of that one language into many languages. He is but a talker and a wrangler about the inheritance; he means to get it to himself by talking and wrangling, by the hypocrisy of his lips and seeming holiness, although he is no better than a bloodthirsty murderer of his brother Abel, who is the right heir.

121. Therefore we say what we know, that he that will call himself a true Christian must try himself, and find what kind of properties drive and rule him, whether the spirit of Christ

moveth him to truth and righteousness, and to the love of his neighbour, so that he would willingly do what is right, if he knew but how.

122. Now if he find that he hath a real hunger after such virtue, then he may justly think that he is drawn. And then he must begin to practise accordingly, and not be content with a will only, without doing. The drawing of the Father to Christ consisteth in the will, but the true life consisteth in the doing; for the right spirit doeth that which is right.

123. But if there be the will to do, and yet the doing followeth not, then the true man is still shut up in vain lust, which suppresseth the doing. And therefore such a one is but a hypocrite and an Ishmaelite; he speaketh one thing and doth another, and witnesseth thereby that his mouth is a liar; for he himself doth not that which he teacheth, and consequently only serveth the bestial man in vanity.

124. For he that will say, 'I have a

will, and would willingly do good, but the earthly flesh, which I carry about me, keepeth me back, so that I cannot; yet I shall be saved by grace, for the merits of Christ. I comfort myself with His merit and sufferings: who will receive me of mere grace, without any merits of my own, and forgive me my sins.' Such a one, I say, is like a man that knoweth what food is good for his health, yet will not eat of it, but eateth poison instead thereof, from whence sickness and death will certainly follow.

125. For what good doth it to the soul to know the way to God, if it will not walk therein, but go on in a contrary path? What good will it do the soul to comfort itself with the filiation of Christ, with his passion and death, and so flatter itself with the hopes of getting the patrimony thereby, if it will not enter into the filial birth, that it may be a true child born out of the spirit of Christ, out of his suffering, death and resurrec-

tion? Surely, the tickling and flattering itself with Christ's merits, without the true innate childship, is falsehood and a lie, whosoever he be that teacheth it.

126. This comfort belongeth only to the penitent sinner, who striveth against sin and the anger of God. When temptations come, and the devil assaulteth such a poor repentant soul, then it must wholly wrap itself up in the merits and death of Christ, as its sole armour of defence.

127. Christ alone indeed hath merited redemption for us; but not in such a way as that for His own proper merit's sake He will freely grant us His childship by an outward adoption only, and so receive us for his children, when we are none. No. He himself is the merit, He is the open gate that leadeth through death; and through that gate we must enter. He receiveth no beast into his merit, but those only that turn, and become as

children. Those children that thus come to Him are His reward, which He hath merited.

128. For thus He said, 'Father, the men were thine and thou hast given them to me,' [as my reward] 'and I will give them eternal life.' But the life of Christ will be given to none, unless they come to Him in His spirit, into His humanity, sufferings, and merit, and therein be born true children of the merit.

129. We must be born of His merit, and put on the merit of Christ in his passion and death; not outwardly with verbal flattery only, and bare comforting of ourselves therewith, while we still remain aliens and strange children, of a strange essence or nature. No, the strange essence inheriteth not the childship, but the innate essence inheriteth it.

130. This innate essence is not of this world, but in heaven, of which St Paul speaketh, saying, Our conversation is in heaven. The filial essence

walketh in heaven, and heaven is in man.

131. But if heaven in man be not open, and the man stand without heaven flattering himself, and say, 'I am still without, but Christ will take me in through His grace; is not His merit mine?' Such a one is in vanity and sin with the outward man, and with the soul in hell, viz., in the anger of God.

132. Therefore learn to understand rightly what Christ hath taught us, and done for us. He is our heaven; He must get a form in us, or else we shall not be in heaven. Thus then the soul's inward man, with the holy body of Christ, viz., in the new birth, is in heaven, and the outward mortal man is in the world, of which Christ spake, saying, 'My sheep are in my hand, and none shall pluck them away; the Father who gave them to me is greater than all.'

CHAPTER VI

Of the right and of the wrong going to Church, receiving the Sacraments, and absolution.

BELOVED brethren, we will teach you faithfully, not with flattering lips to please the Antichrist, but from our Pearl, the virtue, power, and spirit of Christ in us, from a Christian essence and knowledge; not from the husk and history, but from a new-born spirit, from Christ's knowledge, as a branch growing on the vine Christ; from the measure of that knowledge which is opened in us, according to the will and counsel of God.

134. Men tie us in these days to the history, and to the material churches of stone; which churches are indeed good in their kind, if men did also bring the temple of Christ into them. They teach moreover that their absolution is a forgiving of sins, and that

the Supper of the Lord taketh away sin: Also that the spirit of God cometh into men through their ministry. All which hath a proper meaning, if it were rightly understood; and if men did not cleave merely to the husk.

135. Many a man goeth to church twenty or thirty years, heareth sermons, receiveth the Sacraments, and heareth absolution read or declared, and yet is as much a beast of the devil and vanity at the last as at the first. A beast goeth into the church, and to the Supper, and a beast cometh out from thence again.

136. How will he eat that hath no mouth? can any man eat that food which is so shut up that he cannot get it? How will he drink that can come at no water? Or how will he hear that hath no hearing?

137. What good end doth it answer, for me to go to the material churches of stone, and there fill my ears with empty breath? Or to go to the Supper, and feed nothing but the earthy

mouth, which is mortal and corruptible? Cannot I feed and satisfy that with a piece of bread at home? What good doth it to the soul, which is an immortal life, to have the bestial man observe the form, and venerate the shell, of Christ's institution, if it cannot obtain the kernel thereof? For St Paul saith of the Supper,—'You receive it to condemnation, because ye discern not the Lord's body.'

138. The covenant stands firm, and is stirred in the use of the institution. Christ proffereth His spirit to us in His word (viz., in His preached word) and His body and blood in the Sacrament, and His absolution in a brotherly reconciliation one to another.

139. But what good doth it to a beast to stand and listen, who hath no hearing to receive the inward living Word, nor any ground wherein to lay the Word, that it may bring forth fruit? Of such Christ saith, 'The devil plucketh the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.'

But how can he do so? Because the Word findeth no place in the hearing mind to take root in.

140. And thus it is with absolution also: what benefit is it to me for one to say, 'I pronounce or declare to thee the forgiveness of thy sins,' when my soul is wholly shut up in sin? Whosoever saith thus to a sinner so shut up, erreth; and he that receiveth it without the voice of God within himself confirming the same, deceiveth himself. None can forgive sins but God only.

141. The preacher hath not forgiveness of sins in his own power; but it is the spirit of Christ in the voice of the priest that hath the power, provided the priest himself is a Christian.

142. What good did it to those that heard Christ Himself teaching on earth, when he said, 'Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest'? What good did this blessed promise to those that heard it, if they laboured not, nor were

heavy laden? What became of the refreshment or rest then? Seeing they had dead ears, and heard only the outward Christ, and not the Word of the divine power, certainly they were not refreshed. Just so much good the bestial man hath of his absolution and Sacraments.

143. The covenant is open in the Sacraments; and in the office or ministry of teaching also the covenant is stirred; the soul doth receive it, but in that property only of which the mouth of the soul is.

144. That is, the outward beast receiveth bread and wine, which it may have as well at home. And the fiery soul receiveth the Testament according to its property, viz., in the anger of God it receiveth the substance of the eternal world, but according to the property of the dark world; it receiveth therefore, as the Scripture saith, to its own judgment or condemnation. For as the mouth is, so is the food which is taken in by the mouth.

And after this manner also it is, that the wicked shall behold Christ at the Last Judgment as a severe Judge; but the saints shall behold Him as a loving Immanuel.

145. God's anger standeth open in his Testaments towards the wicked; but towards the saints the heavenly loving kindness, and in it the power of Christ in the holy name Jesus standeth open. What good then doth the holy thing do to the wicked, who cannot enjoy it? Or what is it there, that can take away his sins, when his sin is only stirred and made manifest thereby?

146. The Sacraments do not take away sin; neither are sins forgiven thereby. But it is thus: When Christ ariseth, then Adam dieth in the essence of the serpent; as when the sun riseth, the night is swallowed up in the day, and the night is no more: Just so are sins forgiven.

147. The spirit of Christ eateth of his holy substance, the inward man is

the receiver of the holy substance; he receiveth what the spirit of Christ bringeth into him, viz., the temple of God, Christ's flesh and blood. But what doth this concern a beast? Or what doth it concern the devils? Or the soul that is in the anger of God? These eat of the heavenly body, that is in the heaven wherein they dwell, which is the abyss.

148. And thus it is also in the office or ministry of preaching: The ungodly man heareth what the outward soul of the outward world preacheth; that he receiveth, viz., the history; and if there be straw or stubble in that which is taught, he sucketh the vanity out of that. Yea, if the preaching be mere calumny, railing, and uncharitable abuse, as is sometimes the case, then his soul sucketh the venomous poison, and the murdering cruelty of the devil from it, wherewith it tickleth itself, and is pleased with learning how to judge and condemn others.

149. Thus if the preacher be one

that is dead, and hath no true life in him, but soweth only venom and reproach proceeding out of his evil affections, then it is the devil that teacheth, and the devil that heareth. Such teaching is received into a wicked heart, and bringeth forth wicked fruits. By which means the world is become a mere den of murdering devils. So that if you look among the herd of such teachers and hearers, there is little to be found but revilings, slanderings, and reproachings; together with contention about words, and wrangling about the husk.

150. But the Holy Ghost teacheth in the holy teacher, and the spirit of Christ heareth through the soul, which is the divine house of the divine sound or voice in the holy hearer.

151. The holy man hath his church in himself, wherein he heareth and teacheth. But Babel hath a heap of stones, into which she goeth with her seeming holiness and real hypocrisy. There she loveth to be seen in fine

clothes, and maketh a very devout and godly show; the church of stone is her God, in which she putteth her confidence.

152. But the holy man hath his church about him everywhere, even in himself; for he always standeth and walketh, sitteth and lieth down in his church. He liveth in the true Christian Church; yea, in the temple of Christ; the Holy Ghost preacheth to him out of every creature. Whatsoever he looketh upon, he seeth a preacher of God therein.

153. Here now the scoffer will say that I despise the church of stone, where the congregation meeteth; but I say that I do not. For I do but discover the hypocritical whore of Babylon, which committeth whoredom with the church of stone, and termeth herself a Christian, but is indeed a strumpet.

154. A true Christian brings his holy church with him into the congregation. For the heart is the true church, where

a man must practise the service of God. If I should go a thousand times to church, and to the Sacrament every week, and hear absolution declared to me every day, and have not Christ in me, all would be false, an unprofitable fiction and graven image in Babel, and no forgiving of sins.

155. A holy man doth holy works from the holy strength of his mind. The work is not the atonement of reconciliation, but it is the building which the true spirit buildeth in his substance; it is his habitation. But the fiction and fancy is the habitation of the false Christian, into which his soul entereth with dissimulation. The outward hearing reacheth but to the outward, and worketh in the outward only; but the inward hearing goeth into the inward, and worketh in the inward.

156. Dissemble, roar, cry, sing, preach, and teach as much as thou wilt; yet if thine inward teacher and hearer be not open, all is nothing but

a Babel, a fiction, and a graven image, whereby the spirit of the outward world doth model and make to itself a graven image in resemblance of the inward; and maketh a holy show therewith, as if he performed some divine or holy service to God. Whereas many times in such service and worship the devil worketh mightily in the imagination, and very much tickleth the heart with those things wherein the flesh delighteth. Which indeed not seldom happeneth to the children of God, as to their outward man, if they do not take great heed to themselves; so busily doth the devil beset and sift them.

CHAPTER VII

Of unprofitable opinions, and strife about the letter.

A TRUE Christian, who is born anew of the spirit of Christ, is in the simplicity of Christ, and hath no strife or contention with any

man about religion. He hath strife enough in himself, with his own bestial evil flesh and blood. He continually thinketh himself a great sinner, and is afraid of God: But the love of Christ by degrees pierceth through, and expelleth that fear, as the day swalloweth up the night.

159. But the sins of the impenitent man rest in the sleep of death, bud forth in the pit, and produce their fruit in hell.

160. The Christendom that is in Babel, striving about the manner how men ought to serve God, and glorify Him; also how they are to know Him, and what He is in His essence and will. And they preach positively, that whosoever is not one and the same with them in every particular of knowledge and opinion, is no Christian but a heretic.

161. Now I would fain see how all their sects can be brought to agree in that one which might be called a true Christian Church; when all of them

are scorners, every party of them reviling the rest, and proclaiming them to be false.

162. But a Christian is of no sect: He can dwell in the midst of sects, and appear in their services, without being attached or bound to any. He hath but one knowledge, and that is, Christ in him. He seeketh but one way, which is the desire always to do and teach that which is right; and he putteth all his knowing and willing into the life of Christ.

163. He sigheth and wisheth continually that the will of God might be done in him, and that his kingdom might be manifested in him. He daily and hourly killeth sin in the flesh; for the seed of the woman, viz., the inward man in Christ, continually breaketh the head of the serpent, that is, the power of the devil, which is in vanity.

164. His faith is a desire after God and goodness; which he wrappeth up in a sure hope, trusting to the words of the promise, and liveth and dieth

therein: though as to the true man, he never dieth.

165. For Christ saith, 'Whosoever believeth in me shall never die, but hath pierced through from death to life; and rivers of living water shall flow from him,' viz., good doctrine and works.

166. Therefore I say, that whatsoever fighteth and contendeth about the letter, is all Babel. The letters of the word proceed from, and stand all in, one root, which is the spirit of God; as the various flowers stand all in the earth and grow by one another. They fight not with each other about their difference of colour, smell, and taste, but suffer the earth, the sun, the rain, the wind, the heat and cold, to do with them as they please; and yet every one of them groweth in its own peculiar essence and property.

167. Even so it is with the children of God; they have various gifts and degrees of knowledge, yet all from

one spirit. They all rejoice at the great wonders of God, and give thanks to the most high in His wisdom. Why then should they contend about Him in whom they live and have their being, and of whose substance they themselves are?

168. It is the greatest folly that is in Babel, for people to strive about religion, as the devil hath made the world to do; so that they contend vehemently about opinions of their own forging, viz., about the letter; when the kingdom of God consisteth in no opinion, but in power and love.

169. As Christ said to his disciples, and left it with them at the last, saying, 'Love one another, as I have loved you; for thereby men shall know that ye are my disciples.' If men would as fervently seek after love and righteousness as they do after opinions, there would be no strife on earth, and we should be as children of one Father, and should need no law, or ordinance.

170. For God is not served by any law, but only by obedience. Laws are for the wicked, who will not embrace love and righteousness; they are, and must be, compelled and forced by laws.

171. We all have but one only order, law, or ordinance, which is to stand still to the Lord of all beings, and resign our wills up to Him, and suffer His spirit to play what music He will. And thus we give to Him again as His own fruits, that which He worketh and manifesteth in us.

172. Now if we did not contend about our different fruits, gifts, kinds and degrees of knowledge, but did acknowledge them in one another, like children of the spirit of God, what could condemn us? For the kingdom of God consisteth not in our knowing and supposing, but in power.

173. If we did not know half so much, and were more like children, and had but a brotherly mind and good will towards one another, and

lived like children of one mother, and as branches of one tree, taking our sap all from one root, we should be far more holy than we are.

174. Knowledge serves only to this end, viz., to know that we have lost the divine power, in Adam, and are become now inclined to sin; that we have evil properties in us, and that doing evil pleaseth not God; so that with our knowledge we might learn to do right. Now if we have the power of God in us, and desire with all our hearts to act and to live aright, then our knowledge is but our sport, or matter of pleasure, wherein we rejoice.

175. For true knowledge is the manifestation of the spirit of God through the eternal wisdom. He knoweth what He will in His children; He sheweth His wisdom and wonders by His children, as the earth putteth forth its various flowers.

176. Now if we dwell one with another, like humble children, in the

spirit of Christ, one rejoicing at the gift and knowledge of another, who would judge or condemn us? Who judgeth or condemneth the birds in the woods, that praise the Lord of all beings with various voices, every one in its own essence? Doth the spirit of God reprove them for not bringing their voices into one harmony? Doth not the melody of them all proceed from His power, and do they not sport before Him.

177. Those men therefore that strive and wrangle about the knowledge and will of God, and despise one another on that account, are more foolish than the birds in the woods, and the wild beasts that have no true understanding. They are more unprofitable in the sight of the holy God than the flowers of the field, which stand still in quiet submission to the spirit of God, and suffer Him to manifest the divine wisdom and power through them. Yea, such men are worse than thistles and thorns that grow among

fair flowers, for they at least stand still and are quiet, whereas those wranglers are like the ravenous beasts and birds of prey, which fright the other birds from singing and praising God.

178. In short; they are the issue, branches or sprouts of the devil in the anger of God, who, notwithstanding, must by their very tormenting be made to serve the Lord; for by their plaguing and persecuting, they so press out the sap through the essence of the children of God, that they [the children of God] move and stir themselves in the spirit of God, with praying and continual sighing, in which exercise of their powers the spirit of God moveth himself in them.

179. For thereby the desire is exerted, and so the children of God grow green, flourish, and bring forth fruit; for the children of God are manifested in tribulation; as the Scripture saith, 'When thou chastiseth them, they cry fervently to thee.'

CHAPTER VIII

Wherein Christian religion consisteth, and how men should serve God and their brethren.

ALL Christian religion wholly consisteth in this, to learn to know ourselves: whence we are come, and what we are; how we are gone forth from the unity into dissension, wickedness, unrighteousness; how we have awakened and stirred up these evils in us; and how we may be delivered from them again, and recover our original blessedness.

181. First, how we were in the unity, when we were the children of God in Adam before he fell. Secondly, how we are now in dissension and disunion, in strife and contrariety. Thirdly, whither we go when we pass out of this corruptible condition; whither with the immortal, and whither with the mortal part.

182. And lastly, how we may come

forth from disunion and vanity, and enter again into that one Tree, Christ in us, out of which we all sprang in Adam. In these four points all the necessary knowledge of a Christian consisteth.

183. So that we need not strive about anything; we have no cause of contention with each other. Let every one only exercise himself in learning how he may enter again into the love of God and his brother.

184. The Testaments of Christ are nothing else but a loving bond or brotherly covenant, wherewith God in Christ bindeth himself to us and us to him. All teaching, willing, living, and doing, must imply, aim at, and refer to that. All teaching and doing otherwise, whatsoever it be, is Babel and a fiction; a mere graven image of pride in unprofitable judgings, a disturbing of the world, and a hypocrisy of the devil, wherewith he blindeth simplicity.

185. Every preacher void of the spirit of God who, without divine

knowledge, setteth himself up for a teacher of divine things, pretending to serve God thereby, is false, and doth but serve the belly, his idol, and his own proud insolent mind, in desiring to be honoured on that account, and esteemed holy, or a divine in holy orders. He beareth an office, to which he is set apart and chosen by the children of men, who do but flatter him, and for favour have ordained him thereunto.

186. Christ said, 'Whosoever entereth not by the door,' that is, through his spirit, 'into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a murderer, and the sheep follow him not, for they know not his voice.'

187. He hath not the voice of the spirit of God, but the voice of his own art and learning only; the man teacheth, and not the spirit of God. But Christ saith, 'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be plucked up by the roots.'

188. How then will he that is un-

godly plant heavenly plants, when he hath no seed alive in its power in himself? Christ saith expressly, 'The sheep hear not his voice, they follow him not.'

189. The written word is but an instrument whereby the spirit leadeth us to itself within us. That Word which will teach, must be living in the literal word. The spirit of God must be in the literal sound, or else none is a teacher of God, but a mere teacher of the letter, a knower of the history, and not of the spirit of God in Christ.

190. All that men will serve God with, must be done in faith, viz., in the spirit. It is the spirit that maketh the work perfect, and acceptable in the sight of God. All that a man undertaketh and doeth in faith, he doeth in the spirit of God, which spirit of God doth co-operate in the work, and then it is acceptable to God. For He hath done it Himself, and His power and virtue is in it: It is holy.

191. But whatsoever is done in self,

without faith, is but a figure and shell, or husk, of a true Christian work.

192. If thou servest thy brother, and doest it but in hypocrisy, and givest him unwillingly, then thou servest not God. For thy faith proceedeth not from love, nor entereth into hope, in thy gift. Indeed thou servest thy brother, and he for his part thanketh God and blesseth thee, but thou blessest not him. For thou givest him thy gift with a grudging spirit, which entereth not into the spirit of God, into the hope of faith; therefore thy gift is but half given, and thou hast but half thy reward for it.

193. The same is true of receiving a gift. If any giveth in faith, in divine hope, he blesseth his gift by his faith: But whoso receiveth it unthankfully, and murmureth in his spirit, he curseth it in the use or enjoyment of it. Thus it is that every one shall have his own; 'Whatsoever he soweth, that shall he also reap.'

194. So likewise it is in the office of

teaching; 'whatsoever a man soweth, that also he reapeth.' For if any man sow good seed from the spirit of Christ, it sticketh in the good heart, and bringeth forth good fruit; but in the wicked, who are not capable of receiving the good seed, the anger of God is stirred.

195. If any sow contentions, reproaches, and misconstructions, all ungodly people receive that into them; which sticketh in them also, and bringeth forth fruit accordingly. So that they learn thereby to despise, revile, slander, and misrepresent one another. Out of which root the great Babel is sprung and grown; wherein men, from mere pride and strife, contend about the history, and the justification of a poor sinner in the sight of God; thereby causing the simple to err and blaspheme, insomuch that one brother revileth and curseth the other, and excommunicateth, or casteth him to the devil, for the sake of the history and letter.

196. Such railers and revilers fear not God, but raise the great building of dissension. And seeing corrupt lust lieth in all men, in the earthly flesh still, therefore they raise and awaken abominations even in the simple children of God, and make the people of God, as well as the children of iniquity, to blaspheme. And thus they become master-builders of the great Babel of the world, and are as useful in the Church, as a fifth wheel on a waggon; yea, what is worse than that, they erect the hellish building too.

197. Therefore it is highly necessary for the children of God to pray earnestly, that they may learn to know this false building, and go forth from it with their minds, and not help to build it up, and persecute their fellow-children of God. For by that means they keep themselves back from the heavenly kingdom, and turn aside from the right way.

198. According to the saying of

Christ to the Pharisees, 'Woe unto you Pharisees; for you compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is one, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.' Which is truly too much the case with the modern factions and sects among these criers and teachers of strife.

199. I desire therefore, out of my gifts which are revealed to me from God, that all the children of God, who desire to be the true members of Christ, be faithfully warned to depart from such abominable contentions and bloody fire-brands, and to go forth from all strife with their brethren, and strive only after love and righteousness towards all men.

200. For he that is a good tree must bring forth good fruits, and must sometimes suffer swine to devour his fruits, and yet must continue a good tree still, and be always willing to work with God, and not suffer any evil to overcome him. And then he

standeth and groweth in the field of God, and bringeth forth fruit to be set upon God's table, which he shall enjoy for ever. Amen. 'All that hath breath praise the name of the Lord. Hallelujah.'

THE FOURTH BOOK.

A

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN A

Scholar and his Master,

Concerning the

Super-Sensual Life,

SHEWING

How the Soul may attain to Divine Hearing and Vision, and what its Childship in the Natural and Supernatural Life is; and how it passeth out of Nature into God, and out of God into Nature and Self again; also what its Salvation and Perdition are.

Written in the German Language,

(Anno 1624)

By JACOB BOEHME.

WE speak the hidden mystical wisdom of God, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural

man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth, or discerneth, all things.—1 Corinthians ii. 7–15.

OF THE SUPER-SENSUAL LIFE,

OR THE

Life which is above Sense.

In a Dialogue between a *Scholar* or *Disciple* and his *Master.*

THE Scholar said to his Master; How may I come to the super-sensual life, that I may see God and hear him speak?

His Master said, When thou canst throw thyself for a moment into that where no creature dwelleth, then thou hearest what God speaketh.

2. *The Scholar.*—Is that near at hand, or far off?

The Master.—It is in thee, and if thou canst for a while cease from all thy

thinking and willing, thou shalt hear unspeakable words of God.

3. *The Scholar.*—How can I hear when I stand still from thinking and willing?

The Master.—When thou standest still from the thinking and willing of self, then the eternal hearing, seeing, and speaking, will be revealed in thee; and so God heareth and seeth through thee. Thine own hearing, willing, and seeing hindereth thee, that thou dost not see nor hear God.

4. *The Scholar.*—Wherewithal shall I hear and see God; seeing he is above nature and creature?

The Master.—When thou art quiet or silent, then thou art that which God was before nature and creature, and whereof he made thy nature and creature; then thou hearest and seest with that wherewith God saw and heard in thee before thy own willing, seeing, and hearing began.

5. *The Scholar.*—What hindereth or

keepeth me back that I cannot come to that?

The Master.—Thy own willing, hearing, and seeing; and because thou strivest against that out of which thou art come, thou breakest thyself off with thy own willing from God's willing, and with thy own seeing thou seest in thy own willing only, and thy willing stoppeth thy hearing with thy own thinking of earthly natural things, and bringeth thee into a ground [of essential state], and darkeneth thee with that which thou willest, so that thou canst not come to that which is supernatural and super-sensual.

6. *The Scholar.* — Seeing I am in nature, how may I come through nature into the super-sensual ground, without destroying nature?

The Master.—Three things are requisite here; the first is, thou must resign thy will to God, and sink thyself down to the ground in his mercy. The second is, thou must hate thy own will, and not do that whereto thy own will

driveth thee. The third is, thou must submit thyself under the cross, that thou mayest be able to bear the temptations of nature and creature. If thou dost so, God will speak into thee, and bring thy resigned will into himself, into the supernatural ground; and then thou shalt hear what the Lord speaketh in thee.

7. *The Scholar.*—If I should do thus, I must forsake the world and my life too.

The Master.—If thou forsakest the world, thou comest into that whereof the world is made; and if thou losest thy life, and comest to have thy own power faint, then thy life is in that for whose sake thou forsakest it, viz., in God, from whom it came into the body.

8. *The Scholar.*—God hath created man in and for the natural life, to rule over all creatures on earth, and to be a lord over all things in this world; and therefore reason suggests that he should possess it as his own.

How men may and should rule over all creatures, and can be like all things.

The Master.—If thou rulest over all creatures outwardly only, then thy will and ruling is in a bestial kind, and is but an imaginary transitory ruling; and thou also bringest thy desire into a bestial essence, whereby thou becomest infected and captivated, and gettest also a bestial condition. But if thou hast left the imaginary condition, then thou art in the super-imaginariness, and rulest over all creatures in that ground out of which they are created, and nothing on earth can hurt thee; for thou art like all things, and nothing is unlike to thee.

9. *The Scholar.*—O loving Master, pray teach me the shortest way how I may come to be like all things.

The Master.—With all my heart; do but think on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he said, 'Unless ye turn and become as children, ye shall not see the kingdom of God.'

Now if thou wilt be like all things, thou must forsake all things, and turn thy desire away from them, and not desire them, nor seek to possess that for thy own, which is something. For as soon as thou takest something into thy desire, and receivest it into thee for thy own, then that something is the same with thyself, and it worketh with thee in thy will, and then thou art obliged to protect it, and to take care for it as for thy own being. But if thou receive nothing into thy desire, then thou art free from all things, and rulest over all things at once. For thou hast received nothing for thy own, and art nothing to all things, and all things are nothing to thee. Thou art as a child which understandeth not what a thing is; or though thou dost understand it, yet thou understandest it without being affected thereby; in that manner wherein God ruleth and seeth all things, and yet nothing comprehendeth or captivateth him.

Thou didst also desire that I would teach thee how thou mightest attain it. Consider then the words of Christ, who said, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' In thy own power thou canst not come to such rest that no creature should touch thee, unless thou givest thyself wholly up to the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and resignest thy will and desire wholly to Him, and willest nothing without Him. Then with thy body thou art in the world, in the properties, and with thy reason under the cross of our Lord Christ; but with thy will thou walkest in heaven, and art in the original from whence all creatures proceeded, and to which they go again. And then thou mayest behold all things outwardly with thy reason, and inwardly with thy mind, and rule in and over all things with Christ, to whom all power is given both in heaven and on earth.

10. *The Scholar.*—O Master, the creatures that live in me so withhold

me, that I cannot wholly yield and give up myself as I willingly would.

The Master.—If thy will goeth forth from the creatures, then the creatures are forsaken in and by thee; they are in the world, and thy body only is with the creatures, but in thy spirit thou walkest with God. And if thy will leaveth the creatures, then the creatures are dead in it, and live only in the body in the world; and if thy will doth not bring itself into them, they cannot touch thy soul. For St Paul saith, 'Our conversation is in heaven;' also, 'Ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in you;' so then, the Holy Ghost dwelleth in the will, and the creatures dwell in the body.

11. *The Scholar.*—If the Holy Ghost dwell in the will of the mind, how may I keep myself that He may not depart from me?

The Master.—Mark the words of our Lord Jesus Christ; 'If you abide in my words, then my words abide in

you.' If thou dost abide with thy will in the words of Christ, then His word and spirit abide in thee. But if thy will goeth into the creatures, then thou hast broken off thyself from Him, and then thou canst not any other way keep thyself, but by abiding continually in resigned humility, and entering into continual repentance, so that thou art always grieved that creatures live in thee. If thou dost thus, thou standest in a daily dying from the creatures, and in a daily ascending into heaven in and with thy will again.

12. *The Scholar.*—O loving Master, pray teach me how I may come into such a continual repentance.

How men may come to continual repentance, and subsist in temptation.

The Master.—When thou leavest that which loveth thee, and lovest that which hateth thee, then thou mayest abide continually in repentance.

13. *The Scholar.*—What is that which I must thus leave?

The Master.—Thy creatures in flesh and blood, and all other things that love thee, love thee because thy will entertaineth, nourisheth, and preserveth them. These the will must leave and account as enemies. And the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the reproach of the world which hateth thee, thou must learn to love, and take for a daily exercise of thy repentance. And then thou shalt have continual cause to hate thyself in the creature, and to seek the eternal rest, wherein thy will may rest; as Christ said, 'In the world you shall have tribulation, but in me you shall have rest.'

14. *The Scholar.*—How may I stand firm in such a temptation as this?

The Master.—If every hour thou dost once throw thyself beyond all creatures, above all sensual reason, into the mere mercy of God, into the sufferings of our Lord, and yield thyself thereinto, then thou shalt receive power to rule over sin, death, and the

devil, over hell and the world, and then thou mayest stand firm in all temptations.

15. *The Scholar.*—Poor man that I am, what would become of me, if I should attain with my mind to that where no creature is!

The Master.—Loving Scholar, if thy will could break off itself for one hour from all creatures, and throw itself into that where no creature is, it would be presently clothed with the highest splendour of God's glory, and would taste in itself the most sweet love of our Lord Jesus, which no man can express; and it would find in itself the unspeakable words of our Lord concerning his great mercy. It would feel in itself that the cross of our Lord Christ would be very pleasing to it, and it would love that more than the honour and goods of the world.

16. *The Scholar.*—But what would become of the body, since it must live in the creature?

The Master.—The body would be put

into the imitation of our Lord Christ, who said, His kingdom was not of this world. It would begin to die from without and from within; from without, it would die from the vanity and evil deeds of the world; it would be an utter enemy to all pride and insolence. And from within, it would die from all evil lusts and envy, and would get a mind and will in itself wholly new, which would be continually directed towards God and goodness.

17. *The Scholar.* — But the world would hate and despise a man for doing so, seeing he must contradict the world, and live and do otherwise than the world doth.

The Master.—He would not take that as any harm done to him, but would rather rejoice that he is become worthy to be thus conformed to the example of our Lord Christ, and be willing to bear that cross after our Lord, merely that the Lord might bestow the influence of his sweet love upon him.

18. *The Scholar.*—What would be-

come of him, when the anger of God from within, and the wicked world from without, should assault him, as happened to our Lord Christ?

The Master.—Let him be thereunto what our Lord Christ was. When He was reproached, reviled, and crucified by the world and the priests, He commended His soul into the hands of His Father, and so departed from the anguish of this world into the eternal joy. So also such a soul would get forth from the reproach and anguish of all the world, and penetrate into itself, into the great love of God, and be sustained and refreshed by the most sweet name Jesus, and see and find in itself a new world springing forth through the anger of God; then should it wrap itself up therein, and account all things alike. And thus whether the body be in hell or on earth, yet would the soul be in the greatest love of God.

19. *The Scholar.*—But how would a man maintain himself in the world, and

those that belong to him, if he should thus incur the displeasure of all the world?

The Master.—He thereby getteth greater favour than the world is able to bestow, for he hath God, and all His angels for his friends, who protect him in all dangers and necessities. God is his blessing in everything, and though sometimes it may seem as if God would not bless him, it is but to try him, and is in truth the drawing of God's love, that he might the more earnestly pray to God, and commit all his way to Him.

20. *The Scholar.*—But he loseth all his good friends, and there will be none to help him in his necessity.

The Master.—Nay, he getteth the hearts of all his good friends into his possession, and loseth none but his enemies, who before loved his vanity and wickedness.

21. *The Scholar.*—How is it that he getteth his good friends into his possession?

The Master.—He getteth the souls of all those that belong to our Lord Jesus to be his brethren and the members of his own life. For the children of God are but one in Christ, which One is Christ in all. Therefore he getteth them all to be his fellow-members in the body of Christ, for they have the heavenly goods in common, and live in one and the same love of God, as the branches of a tree spring from one and the same sap. Nor will he want outward natural friends, any more than our Lord Christ did. For though the high priests and potentates of the world who belonged not to Him, nor were His members and brethren, loved Him not, yet those who were capable of His words loved Him. So likewise those that love truth and righteousness would love that man, and associate themselves with him; as Nicodemus did with Christ, who came to Him by night, and in his heart loved Jesus for the truth's sake, yet

outwardly feared the world. And thus shall such a man have many friends rise up who were not known to him at the beginning.

22. *The Scholar.* — But it is very grievous to be despised by all the world.

The Master.—That which now seems hard and heavy to thee thou wilt afterwards love most of all.

23. *The Scholar.*—How can it be that I should love that which hateth me?

The Master. — Though thou lovest the earthly wisdom now, yet when thou art clothed with the heavenly, thou wilt see that all the wisdom of the world is but folly, and that the world hateth but thine enemy, viz., the mortal life; and when thou thyself comest to hate the will thereof, then thou also wilt begin to love that despising of the mortal life.

24. *The Scholar.*—But how may these two stand together, viz., that a man should both love and hate himself?

The Master.—In thus loving thyself

thou lovest not thyself, as thy own, but as given from the love of God; thou lovest the divine ground in thee; by which thou lovest the divine wisdom, God's works of wonder, and thy brethren. But in hating thyself thou hatest only that which is thy own, wherein evil sticketh close to thee; and this thou dost, that thou mayest wholly destroy in thee that which thou callest thine, when thou sayest 'I' or myself do this or that. This thou wouldst wholly destroy in thee, that thou mayest become a ground wholly divine. Love hateth self, or that which we call 'I,' because it is a deadly thing, and they two, viz., love and self cannot well stand together. For love possesseth heaven, and dwelleth in itself; but that which I call 'I,' possesseth the world, and worldly things, and also dwelleth in itself. And as heaven ruleth the world, and as eternity ruleth time, so love ruleth over the natural life.

25. *The Scholar.* — Loving Master,

pray tell me wherefore must love and trouble, friend and foe be together; would not love alone be better?

How love and sorrow stand together in one; and what love is, what its power, virtue, height and greatness are; and where it dwelleth in man; also the nearest way to attain it.

The Master.—If love dwelt not in trouble, it could have nothing to love; but its substance which it loveth, viz., the poor soul, being in trouble and pain, love hath cause to lose its own substance, in order to deliver its beloved from pain, that itself also might be beloved again. Neither indeed could it be known what love is, if it had not something which it might love.

26. *The Scholar.*—What is the virtue, power, height, and greatness of love?

The Master.—Its virtue is that nothing whence all things proceed, and its power is in and through all things;

its height is as high as God, and its greatness is greater than God. [Here is meant the manifestation of the Deity in the glorious eternal light of the divine essence.] Whosoever findeth it, findeth nothing and all things.

27. *The Scholar.*—Loving Master, pray tell me how I may understand this.

The Master.—What I meant by saying, 'its virtue is that nothing whence all things proceed,' thou mayest understand thus. When thou art wholly gone forth from the creature, and become nothing to all that is nature and creature, then thou art in that eternal One which is God Himself, and then thou shalt perceive and feel the highest virtue of love.

But as to what I said that 'its power is in and through all things,' thou shalt perceive and find that in thy own soul and body, when this great love is kindled in thee, it will burn more than any fire can do. Thou shalt see also in all the works of God that love hath

poured forth itself into all things, and is the most inward and most outward ground in all things. Inwardly, in the virtue and power; and outwardly, in the figure, form and shape, of every thing.

The meaning of that which I said, viz., 'its height is as high as God,' thou mayest also come to understand in thyself, in that it will bring thee to be as high as God himself is; as may be seen by our beloved Lord Christ in our humanity; which humanity love hath brought into the highest throne, even into the power of the Deity.

But that which I further said, 'its greatness is greater than God,' is also true. For love entereth into that where God dwelleth not, as when our beloved Lord Christ was in hell, hell was not God, but love was there and destroyed death. Also, when thou art in anguish and trouble of soul, God is not the anguish or trouble, but His love is there, and bringeth thee out of anguish into God. When God hideth

Himself in thee, love is there, and maketh Him manifest in thee.

And that which I said, 'whosoever findeth it, findeth nothing and all things,' is also true, for he findeth a supernatural, super-sensual abyss having no ground, where there is no place to dwell in. He findeth also nothing that is like it, and therefore it may be compared to nothing; for it is deeper than anything, and is as nothing to all things, for it is not comprehensible. And, because it is nothing, it is free from all things, and is that only good which a man cannot describe or express what it is.

But that which I lastly said, 'he that findeth it, findeth all things,' is also true; it hath been the beginning of all things, and it ruleth all things. If thou findest it, thou comest into that ground from whence all things proceeded, and wherein they subsist; and thou art in it a king over all the works of God.

28. *The Scholar.*—Loving Master,

pray tell me where dwelleth it in man?

The Master.—Where man dwelleth not, there it hath its seat in man.

29. *The Scholar.*—Where is that in a man's self where man dwelleth not?

The Master.—It is in the soul that is resigned to the ground, where the soul dieth to its own will, and willeth no more of itself, but only what God willeth. That is the place in a man's self where man dwelleth not, and there love dwelleth. For so much of the soul as its own will is dead to itself in, so much place love hath taken up therein; for where its own will sat before, there now is nothing, and where nothing is, there the love of God is working alone.

30. *The Scholar.*—But how may I comprehend or attain it without the dying of my will?

The Master.—If thou wilt comprehend it in thy own will, it flieth away from thee; but if thou yieldest thyself

wholly up to it, then thou art dead to thyself in thy own will, and love will then be the life of thy nature. It killeth thee not, but quickeneth thee according to its life, and then thou livest, yet not to thy own will, but to its will; for thy will becometh its will, and then thou art dead to thyself, but alive unto God.

31. *The Scholar.*—How is it that so few find it, when all would so fain have it?

The Master.—Because they all seek it in something, viz., in an imaginary opinion, in self-desire, whereto almost all have a peculiar natural lust or inclination. And though love should proffer itself to them, it could find no harbour or dwelling-place in them, because the imaginariness that is in their own will hath set itself in the place thereof. And that imaginariness of self-lust would fain have the love in it; but love flieth away, for it dwelleth only in nothing, and therefore such souls find it not.

32. *The Scholar.*—What is the office of it in nothing?

The Master.—Its office is to penetrate without intermission into something; and if it find a place in something which standeth still, then its office is to take possession thereof, and to rejoice therein with its flaming fire of love, more than the sun in this world; and without intermission to kindle a fire in something, and to consume the something, and to enflame itself therewith.

33. *The Scholar.*—O loving Master! How shall I understand this?

The Master.—If it may but kindle a fire in thee, thou shalt feel how it consumeth thy selfhood, that which thou callest 'I,' and rejoiceth so exceedingly in thy fire, that thou wouldst rather suffer thyself to be killed, than to enter again into thy something. Its flame also is so great, that it would not leave thee, though it should cost thy temporal life; it would go with thee in its fire into death; nay

if thou wentest into hell, it would even destroy hell for thy sake.

34. *The Scholar.*—Loving Master, I can no longer endure that anything should divert me from this love; how shall I find the nearest way to it?

The Master.—Where the way is hardest, there walk thou, and take up what the world rejecteth; and what the world doth, that do not thou. Walk contrary to the world in all things, and then thou takest the nearest way to it.

35. *The Scholar.*—If I should walk contrary to the world in everything, I must needs live in mere misery and unquietness, and I should also be accounted a fool.

The Master.—I do not bid thee do harm to any; but because the world loveth only deceit and vanity, and walketh in false and wicked ways; therefore if thou wilt act a quite contrary part to the ways thereof in all things, walk only in the right way. For the right way is contrary to all the ways of the world.

But whereas thou sayest thou shouldst live in mere anguish and trouble: that indeed will be so according to the flesh; and will give thee occasion of continual repentance; and in such anxiety the love will most readily kindle its fire.

What thou sayest also, viz., 'that thou shouldst be accounted a fool,' is true; for the way to the love of God is folly to the world, but wisdom to the children of God. When the world perceiveth this fire of love kindled in the children of God, it saith they are turned fools; but to the children of God it is the greatest treasure; so great that no life can express, nor tongue describe, what the fire of the inflaming love of God is. It is brighter than the sun, and sweeter than anything. It is far more nourishing and vital than any meat or drink, and more pleasant than all the joy of this world. Whosoever getteth it is richer than any king on earth, more noble than any emperor,

and more potent and strong than all authority and power.

Whither the blessed and the damned souls go, when they depart from their bodies; and how heaven and hell are in man.

36. Then the scholar asked his Master further, saying, Whither go the souls, both of the saved and the damned, when they leave these mortal bodies?

His Master answered, The soul needeth no going forth; only the outward mortal life and the earthly body do at death separate themselves from the soul. The soul hath heaven and hell in itself before; as it is written, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with outward observation; neither shall they say, lo here, or lo there, it is, for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.' And whether of the two states, viz., either heaven or hell, shall be manifested in the soul, in that it standeth.

37. *The Scholar.*—Doth it not enter

into heaven or hell, as a man entereth into a house, or goeth through a door or passage, into another place?

The Master.—No, there is no such kind of entering; for heaven and hell are present everywhere, and it is but the turning of the will either into God's love, or into his anger, that introduceth into them. And that cometh to pass in this life, according to the saying of St Paul, 'Our conversation is in heaven;' and Christ saith also, 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand.'

38. *The Scholar.*—How cometh to pass this entering of the will into heaven or hell?

The Master.—When the ground of the will yieldeth itself up to God, then it sinketh down from itself beyond all ground and place, where God only is manifest, worketh and willeth, and then it becometh nothing to itself, as to its own willing, and so God worketh

and willeth in it. Yea, God dwelleth in this resigned will; by which means the soul is sanctified, and so cometh into divine rest. Now when the body is dead, the soul is throughly penetrated and saturated with the love of God, and throughly enlightened with the light of God; even as the fire throughly inflameth a red-hot iron, whereby it loseth its darkness. This is the right hand of Christ; where the love of God throughly possesseth the soul all over, and is a shining light and a new life in it; and thus the soul is in heaven, and a temple of the Holy Ghost; yea, it is indeed itself the very heaven of God in which He dwelleth. But the case of the wicked soul is this: It will not in the time of this life enter into the divine resignation of its will, but goeth on continually in its own lust and falsehood, in the will of the devil. It receiveth into itself nothing but wickedness, lies, pride, covetousness, envy, and anger, and yieldeth its will unto them. By which means the hell-

ish element also becometh manifest and working in the soul, and throughly penetrateth and possesseth it all over, as fire doth a burning hot iron. Now such a soul cannot come to divine rest, for God's anger is manifested in it. And therefore when the body parteth from it, then its eternal grief and despair begin. For it perceiveth and findeth that it is become a mere self-tormenting abomination, and is ashamed to strive to enter with its false will into God. Nay, it cannot; for it is captivated in the wrath, and is itself mere wrath, and hath shut itself up therein by its false and evil desire, which it hath raised up in itself. And seeing the light of God shineth not in it, and his love toucheth it not, therefore it is a great darkness and an aching anguishing source of fire, which carrieth hell in itself, and cannot reach the light of God. Thus it dwelleth in itself in hell, and needeth no entering into it, for wheresoever it is, it is in hell; though it should cast

itself many hundred thousand miles from the place it is in, yet it abideth still in the same property and source of darkness.

39. *The Scholar.* — How cometh it then that a holy soul in this lifetime, doth not perfectly perceive that heavenly light and joy, nor a wicked soul feel hell, when both of them are thus in man, and one of them of necessity worketh in him?

The Master.—The kingdom of heaven in the saints is working and sensible in their faith; they feel the love of God in their faith, by which the will yieldeth itself up into God. But the natural life is environed with flesh and blood, standeth in the contrariety of God's anger, and is also compassed about and closely beset with the vain lust of this outward world. So that the poor soul liveth in the midst of its enemies, having the world on one side, the devil on the other, and on a third the curse of the anger of God in flesh and blood; which continually sift, try, and

throughly penetrate the life of man, who is often brought into bitter anguish, through these several assaults of hell, which would fain manifest itself in him. But the soul sinketh down in the hope of divine grace, and standeth like a fair rose in the midst of thorns, until the kingdom of this world falleth off from it in the death of the body; and then doth it become first truly and really manifest in the love of God, having nothing more to hinder or molest it. But during the time of this life in the body it must walk with Christ, who will stand by it and deliver it out of its own hell by throughly penetrating it with his love, and thus change its hell into heaven.

But to thy question, why do not the wicked feel hell in the time of this life? I answer, He hath it indeed, and sometimes feeleth it in his evil conscience, but not perfectly, nor doth he know that it is hell. For he possesseth earthly vanity as yet, with which he is enamoured, and in which he

taketh delight and pleasure; also the outward life hath yet the light of the outward nature, and so the hellish pain cannot be fully manifested and felt. But when the body dieth, and the soul can no longer enjoy temporal pleasure, or be cheered with the light of this outward world, then it standeth in eternal hunger and thirst after such vanity, as it was in love withal here. Yet it can reach nothing but that evil will which it had impressed in itself, and too much gratified in this life, though it was not, nor indeed could be, satisfied with such gratification of it. However, there it cannot gratify it at all, which maketh it to be in everlasting and fruitless hunger and thirst after vanity, wickedness, and vile lewdness. It would fain do more evil still, but hath not wherein or wherewith to perform it, and therefore performeth it only in itself, in its will: And this hellish hunger and thirst cannot be fully manifested in it, till the body dieth, wherewith the soul hath played

the wanton in voluptuousness, and which hath ministered to the soul what it lusted after.

40. *The Scholar.*—Heaven and hell being in us in strife in this lifetime, and God being also thus near us, where do the angels and devils dwell?

Where the angels and devils dwell in this world's time; how far heaven and hell are asunder; and what and whence the angels and human souls are.

The Master.—Where thou dost not dwell as to thyself and thy own will, there the angels dwell with thee and everywhere all over the universe; but where thou dwellest as to thyself and thy own will, there the devils dwell with thee, and everywhere all over the universe.

41. *The Scholar.*—I understand not this.

The Master.—Where the will of God willeth in any being, there God is manifested in that being; and in that manifestation the angels also dwell;

but where God in any being willeth not with the will of the being, there God is not manifested in it, but dwelleth in Himself without the co-operating of the being. In that being its own will is without God's will, and there the devil dwelleth, and all whatever is without God.

42. *The Scholar.*—How far then are heaven and hell from each other?

The Master.—As far as day and night, something and nothing are from one another; they are in each other, and they cause joy and trouble one to the other. Heaven is through the whole world, and without the world all over the universal system of nature, without being divided or included in a place, and worketh through the divine manifestation, but only in itself, and in that which cometh into it, or in that wherein it becometh manifest; and there God is revealed. For heaven is nothing but a manifestation of the eternal One, wherein all worketh and willeth in quiet love.

Hell also is through the whole world, and dwelleth and worketh only also in itself, and in that wherein the foundation of hell is manifested, viz., in self, and in the false and evil will. The visible world hath both heaven and hell in it. Man, as to his temporal life, is only of the visible world, and therefore during the time of this life he seeth not the spiritual world. For the outward world with its substance is a cover to the spiritual world, as the body is to the soul. But when the outward man dieth, then the spiritual world is manifested in and to the soul, either in the eternal light with the holy angels, or in the eternal darkness with the devils.

43. *The Scholar.*—What is an angel or the soul of a man, that they may be manifested thus, either in God's love or anger?

The Master.—They came from one original; they are branches or outbirths of the divine science of the divine will, sprung from the divine

Word, and made objects of the divine love. They are come out of the ground of eternity, from whence light and darkness spring, viz., darkness consisting in the harbouring and cherishing self-desire, and light consisting in willing the same with God. In which willing the love of God readily and gladly worketh; but in the receiving and entertaining self in the willing of the soul, God's will worketh in pain, and becometh a darkness, that the light may be known. Thus heaven and hell are nothing else but a manifestation of the divine will, either in light or darkness, according to the properties of the spiritual world.

44. *The Scholar.*—What then is the body of man?

What the body of man is; and why the soul is capable of receiving good and evil.

The Master.—It is the visible world; an image and quintessence or compound of all that the world is; and the visible world is a manifestation of

the inward spiritual world, come out of the eternal light and out of the eternal darkness, out of the spiritual compaction or connection; and it is also an image or figure of eternity, whereby eternity hath made itself visible; where self-will and resigned will, viz., evil and good work one with the other.

Such a substance is the outward man. For God created man of the outward world, and breathed into him the inward spiritual world for a soul and an intelligent life, and therefore in the things of the outward world man can receive and work evil and good.

45. *The Scholar.*—What shall be after this world, when all things perish, and come to an end?

Of the destruction of the world; of man's body in and after the resurrection; where heaven and hell shall be; of the Last Judgment; and wherefore the strife in the creature must be.

The Master.—The material substance only ceaseth; viz., the four elements,

the sun, moon, and stars. And then the inward world will be wholly visible and manifest. But whatsoever hath been wrought by the will or spirit of man in this world's time, whether evil or good, I say, every such work shall there separate itself in a spiritual manner, either into the eternal light or into the eternal darkness. For that which is born from each will penetrateth and passeth again into that which is like itself. And there the darkness is called hell, and is an eternal forgetting of all good; and the light is called the kingdom of God, and is an eternal joy in and to the saints, who continually glorify and praise God, for having delivered them from the torment of evil.

The Last Judgment is a kindling of the fire both of God's love and anger, in which the matter of every substance perisheth, and each fire shall attract into itself its own, that is, the substance that is like itself: Thus God's fire of love will draw into it whatso-

ever is born in the love of God, or love-principle, in which also it shall burn after the manner of love, and yield itself into that substance. But the torment will draw into itself what is wrought in the anger of God in darkness, and consume the false substance; and then there will remain only the painful aching will in its own proper nature, image, and figure.

46. *The Scholar.*—With what matter and form shall the human body rise?

The Master.—It is sown a natural gross and elementary body, which in this lifetime is like the outward elements; yet in this gross body there is a subtle power and virtue. As in the earth also there is a subtle good virtue, which is like the sun and is one and the same with the sun; which also in the beginning of time did spring and proceed out of the divine power and virtue, from whence all the good virtue of the body is likewise derived. This good virtue of the mortal body shall come again and

live for ever in a kind of transparent crystalline material property, in spiritual flesh and blood; as shall also the good virtue of the earth, for the earth likewise shall become crystalline, and the divine light shine in everything that hath a being, essence, or substance. And as the gross earth shall perish and never return, so also the gross flesh of man shall perish and not live for ever. But all things must appear before the judgment, and in the judgment be separated by the fire; yea, both the earth and also the ashes of the human body. For when God shall once move the spiritual world, every spirit shall attract its spiritual substance to itself. A good spirit and soul shall draw to itself its good substance, and an evil one its evil substance. But we must here understand by substance such a material power and virtue, the essence of which is mere virtue, like a material tincture (such a thing as hath all figures, colours and virtues in it, and is at the

same time transparent), the grossness whereof is perished in all things.

47. *The Scholar.*—Shall we not rise again with our visible bodies, and live in them for ever? See the *Forty Questions of the Soul*, Question 21, Verse 12.

The Master.—When the visible world perisheth, then all that which hath come out of it, and hath been external, shall perish with it. There shall remain of the world only the heavenly crystalline nature and form, and of man also only the spiritual earth; for man shall be then wholly like the spiritual world, which as yet is hidden.

48. *The Scholar.* — Shall there be husband and wife, or children or kindred in the heavenly life, or shall one associate with another, as they do in this life?

The Master.—Why art thou so fleshly-minded? There will be neither husband nor wife, but all will be like the angels of God, viz., masculine virgins. There will be neither son

nor daughter, brother nor sister, but all of one stock and kindred. For all are but one in Christ, as a tree and its branches are one, though distinct as creatures; but God is All in All. Indeed, there will be spiritual knowledge of what every one hath been, and done, but no possessing or enjoying, or desire of possessing earthly things, or enjoying fleshly relations any more.

49. *The Scholar.*—Shall they all have that eternal joy and glorification alike?

The Master.—The Scripture saith, 'Such as the people is, such is their God.' And in another place, 'With the holy thou art holy, and with the perverse thou art perverse.' And St Paul saith, 'In the resurrection one shall differ from another in glory, as do the sun, moon and stars.' Therefore know, that the blessed shall indeed all enjoy the divine working in and upon them; but their virtue, and illumination, or glory, shall be very different, according as they have

been endued in this life with different measures and degrees of power and virtue in their painful working. For the painful working of the creature in this lifetime is the opening and begetting of divine power, by which that power is made movable and operative. Now those who have wrought with Christ in this lifetime, and not in the lust of the flesh, shall have great power and transcendent glorification in and upon them. But others, who have only expected, and relied upon, an imputed satisfaction, and in the meanwhile have served their belly-god, and yet at last have turned, and obtained grace; those, I say, shall not attain to so high a degree of power and illumination. So that there will be as great a difference of degrees between them as is between the sun, moon, and stars; or between the flowers of the field in their varieties of beauty, power, and virtue.

50. *The Scholar.* — How shall the world be judged, and by whom?

The Master.—Jesus Christ, that Word of God which became man, shall by the power of His divine stirring or motion separate from Himself all that belongeth not to Him, and shall wholly manifest His kingdom in the place or space where this world now is; for the separating motion worketh all over the universe, through all at once.

51. *The Scholar.*—Whither shall the devils and all the damned be thrown, when the place of this world is the kingdom of Christ, and as such shall be glorified? Shall they be cast out of the place of this world? or shall Christ have and manifest His dominion out of the sphere or place of this world?

The Master.—Hell shall remain in the place or sphere of this world everywhere, but hidden to the kingdom of heaven, as the night is hidden in and to the day. 'The light shall shine for ever in the darkness, but the darkness can never comprehend or reach it.' And the light is the kingdom of

Christ; but the darkness is hell, wherein the devils and the wicked dwell; and thus they shall be suppressed by the kingdom of Christ, and made His footstool, viz., a reproach.

52. *The Scholar.*—How shall all people and nations be brought to judgment?

The Master.—The eternal Word of God, out of which every spiritual creaturely life hath proceeded, will move itself at that hour, according to love and anger, in every life which is come out of the eternity, and will draw every creature before the judgment of Christ, to be sentenced by this motion of the Word. The life will then be manifested in all its works, and every soul shall see and feel its judgment and sentence in itself. For the judgment is, indeed, immediately at the departure of the body, manifested in and to every soul: And the Last Judgment is but a return of the spiritual body, and a separation of the world, when the evil shall be separated from the good, in the substance of the

world and of the human body, and everything enter into its eternal receptacle. And thus is it a manifestation of the mystery of God in every substance and life.

53. *The Scholar.*—How will the sentence be pronounced?

The Master.—Here consider the words of Christ. 'He will say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me. I was sick, and ye visited me, in prison, and ye came unto me.

'Then shall they answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or in prison, and ministered thus unto thee?

'Then shall the King answer and say unto them, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

'And unto the wicked on his left hand he will say, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison, and ye ministered not unto me.

'And they shall also answer him and say, When did we see thee thus, and ministered not unto thee?

'And he will answer them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

'And these shall depart into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.'

54. *The Scholar.* — Loving Master, pray tell me why Christ saith, 'What you have done to the least of these you have done to me; and what you have not done to them, neither have you done it to me.' And how doth a man this so, as he that doeth it to Christ himself.

The Master.—Christ dwelleth really

and essentially in the faith of those that wholly yield up themselves to Him, and giveth them His flesh for food, and His blood for drink; and thus possesseth the ground of their faith, according to the interior or inward man. And a Christian is called a branch of the vine Christ, and a Christian, because Christ dwelleth spiritually in him; therefore whatsoever good any shall do to such a Christian in his bodily necessities, it is done to Christ Himself who dwelleth in him. For such a Christian is not his own, but is wholly resigned to Christ, and become His peculiar possession, and consequently the good deed is done to Christ Himself. Therefore also whosoever shall withhold their help from such a needy Christian, and forbear to serve him in his necessity, they thrust Christ away from themselves, and despise Him in His members. When a poor person that belongeth thus to Christ asketh anything of thee, and thou deniest it him

in his necessity, thou deniest it to Christ Himself. And whatsoever hurt any shall do to such a Christian, they do it to Christ Himself. When any mock, scorn, revile, reject, or thrust away such a one, they do all that to Christ; but he that receiveth him, giveth him meat and drink, or apparel, and assisteth him in his necessities, doth it likewise to Christ, and to a fellow-member of his own body. Nay, he doth it to himself if he be a Christian; for we all are one in Christ, as a tree and its branches are one.

55. *The Scholar.*—How then will those subsist in the day of that fierce judgment, who afflict and vex the poor and distressed, and deprive them of their very sweat; necessitating and constraining them by force to be subject to their wills, and trampling upon them, as their footstools, only that they themselves may live in pomp and power, and spend the fruits of this poor people's

sweat and labour in voluptuousness, pride, and vanity?

The Master.—Christ suffereth in the persecution of His members. Therefore all the wrong that such hard exactors do to the poor wretches under their control, is done to Christ Himself: and falleth under His severe sentence and judgment. And besides that, they help the devil to augment his kingdom; for by such oppression of the poor they draw them off from Christ, and make them seek unlawful ways to fill their bellies. Nay, they work for and with the devil himself, doing the very same thing which he doth; who, without intermission, opposeth the kingdom of Christ, which consisteth only in love. All these oppressors, if they do not turn with their whole hearts to Christ, and minister to, or serve Him, must go into hell-fire, which is fed and kept alive by nothing else but such mere self as that which they have exercised over the poor here.

56. *The Scholar.*—But how will it fare with those, and how will they be able to stand that severe trial who in this time do so fiercely contend about the kingdom of Christ, and slander, revile, and persecute one another for their religion; as they do?

The Master.—All such have not yet known Christ; and are but as a type or figure of heaven and hell, striving with each other for the victory.

All rising, swelling pride, which contendeth about opinions, is an image of self. And whosoever hath not faith and humility, nor liveth in the spirit of Christ, which is love, is only armed with the anger of God, and helpeth forward the victory of the imaginary self, that is, the kingdom of darkness, and the anger of God. For at the Day of Judgment all self shall be given to the darkness; as shall also all the unprofitable contentions of men; in which they seek not after love, but merely after their imaginary self, that they may exalt

themselves by exalting and establishing their opinions; stirring up princes to wars for the sake of the same, and by that means occasioning the desolation of whole countries of people. All such things belong to the judgment, which will separate the false from the true; and then all images or opinions shall cease, and all the children of God shall dwell for ever in the love of Christ, and that in them.

All whosoever in this time of strife, namely, from the fall to the resurrection, are not zealous in the spirit of Christ, and desirous to promote peace and love, but seek and strive for themselves only, are of the devil, and belong to the pit of darkness, and must consequently be separated from Christ. For in heaven all serve God their Creator in humble love.

57. *The Scholar.*—Wherefore then doth God suffer such strife and contention to be in this time?

The Master.—The life itself standeth in strife, that it may be made manifest,

sensible, and palpable, and that the wisdom may be made separable and known.

The strife also constituteth the eternal joy of the victory. For there will arise great praise and thanksgiving in the saints from the experimental sense and knowledge that Christ in them hath overcome darkness, and all the self of nature, and that they are at length totally delivered from the strife; at which they shall rejoice eternally, when they shall know how the wicked are recompensed. And therefore God suffereth all souls to stand in a free will, that the eternal dominion both of love and anger, of light and of darkness, may be made manifest and known; and that every life might cause and find its own sentence in itself. For that which is now a strife and pain to the saints in their wretched warfare here, shall in the end be turned into great joy to them; and that which hath been a joy and pleasure to ungodly persons

in this world, shall afterwards be turned into eternal torment and shame to them. Therefore the joy of the saints must arise to them out of death, as the light ariseth out of a candle by the destruction and consumption of it in its fire; that so the life may be freed from the painfulness of nature, and possess another world.

And as the light hath quite another property than the fire hath, for it giveth and yieldeth itself forth; whereas the fire draweth in and consumeth itself; so the holy life of meekness springeth forth through the death of self-will, and then God's will of love only ruleth, and doth all in all. For thus the eternal One hath attained feeling and separability, and brought itself forth again with the feeling, through death, in great joyfulness; that there might be an eternal delight in the infinite Unity, and an eternal cause of joy; and therefore painfulness must now be the ground and cause of this motion or stirring to

the manifestation of all things. And herein lieth the Mystery of the hidden Wisdom of God.

Every one that asketh receiveth, every one that seeketh findeth, and to every one that knocketh it shall be opened.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with us all. Amen.

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